

REMARKS

UPON

A Late BOOK,

ENTITLED,

The FABLE of the BEES,

OR

Private VICES, Publick BENEFITS.

IN A

LETTER to the AUTHOR.

To which is added,

A POSTSCRIPT, containing an
Observation or two upon Mr. BAYLE.

By WILLIAM LAW, M. A.

The Second Edition.

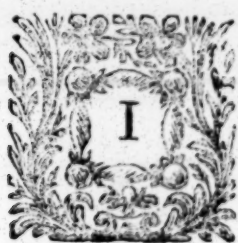
L O N D O N:

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S I R,



H A V E read your several Compositions in favour of the Vices and Corruptions of Mankind; and hope I need make no Apology, for presuming to offer a Word or two on the Side of Virtue and Religion.

I shall spend no Time in Preface, or general Reflexions, but proceed directly to the Examination of such Passages as expose *moral Virtue*, as a Fraud and Imposition, and render all Pretences to it, as odious and contemptible.

Tho' I direct my self to you, I hope it will be no Offence, if I sometimes speak, as if I was speaking to a Christian, or shew some ways of thinking, that may be owing to that kind of worship which is professed

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amongst

amongst us. Ways of thinking deriv'd from reveal'd Religion are much more suitable to our low Capacities, than any arrogant Pretences to be wise, by our own Light.

Moral Virtue, however disregarded in Practice, has hitherto had a speculative Esteem amongst Men; her Praises have been celebrated by Authors of all kinds, as the confess'd Beauty, Ornament and Perfection of Human Nature.

On the contrary, *Immorality* has been look'd upon as the greatest Reproach and Torment of Mankind; no Satyr hath been thought severe enough upon its natural Baseness and Deformity, nor any Wit able to express the Evils it occasions in private Life and publick Societies.

Your Goodness would not suffer you to see, this part of Christendom, deluded with such false Notions, of I know not what *Excellence* in Virtue, or *Evil* in Vice; but oblig'd you immediately to compose a *System*, (as you call it) wherein you do these three things.

1st. You consider Man, *merely* as an *Animal* having like other Animals, nothing to do but to follow his Appetites.

2^{dly} You consider Man as cheated and flatter'd out of his natural State, by the Craft of Moralists, and pretend to be very
sure,

sure, that the *moral Virtues are the political offspring which Flattery begot upon Pride.*

So that Man and Morality are here both destroy'd together; Man is declar'd to be only an *Animal*, and Morality an Impos-
ture.

According to this Doctrine, to say that a Man is dishonest, is making him just such a Criminal, as a Horse that does not dance.

But this is not all, for you dare farther affirm in praise of Immorality, *That Evil as well moral, as natural, is the solid Basis, the Life and Support of all Trades and Employments without exception; that there we must look for the true Origin of all Arts and Sciences, and that the Moment Evil ceases, the Society must be spoil'd, if not dissolv'd**.

These are the chief Doctrines, which with more than Fanatick Zeal you recommend to your Readers; and if lewd Stories, prophane Observations, loose Jest, and haughty Assertions, might pass for Arguments, few People would be able to dispute with you.

I shall begin with your Definition of Man. *As for my part, say you, without any Compliment to the courteous Reader, or my self, I believe, Man (besides Skin, Flesh, Bones, &c. that are obvious to the Eye)*

* p. ccccxviii.

Eye) to be a Compound of various Passions, that all of them as they are provok'd, and come uppermost, govern him by turns whether he will or no *.

Surely this Definition is too General, because it seems to suit a *Wolf* or a *Bear*, as exactly as your self, or a *Grecian Philosopher*.

You say, *you believe Man to be, &c.* now I can't understand to what part of you, this believing Faculty is to be ascrib'd; for your Definition of Man makes him incapable of believing any thing, unless believing can be said to be a *Passion*, or some Faculty of *Skin* or *Bones*.

But supposing such a Belief as yours, because of its blindness, might justly be call'd a *Passion*, yet surely there are greater things conceiv'd by some Men, than can be ascrib'd to mere *Passions*, or *Skin* and *Flesh*.

That reach of Thought, and strong Penetration which has carry'd *Sir Isaac Newton* through such Regions of Science, must truly be owing to some higher Principle. Or will you say, that all his Demonstrations, are only so many blind Sallies of *Passion*?

If Man had nothing but *Instincts* and *Passions*, he could not *dispute* about them; for

* Introd.

for to *dispute* is no more an *Instinct*, or a *Passion*, than it is a *Leg*, or an *Arm*.

If therefore you would prove your self to be no more, than a *Brute*, or an *Animal*, how much of your Life you need alter I can't tell, but you must at least forbear writing against Virtue, for no *mere Animal* ever hated it.

But however, since you desire to be thought only *Skin* and *Flesh*, and a *Compound of Passions*, I'll forget your better part, as much as you have done, and consider you in your own way. You tell us, *that the moral Virtues are the political offspring, which Flattery begot upon Pride* *.

You therefore who are an Advocate for moral Vices, should by the Rule of Contraries, be supposed to be acted by *Humility*; but that being (as I think) not of the number of the Passions, you have no Claim to be guided by it.

The prevailing Passions, which you say have the sole Government of Man in their turns, are Pride, Shame, Fear, Lust, and Anger; you have appropriated the moral Virtues to *Pride*, so that your own Conduct must be ascribed either to Fear, Shame, Anger or Lust, or else to a beautiful Union and Concurrence of them all.

I don't

I don't doubt, but you are already angry, that I consider you, only as an Animal, that acts as Anger or Lust or any other Passion moves it, altho' it is your own Assertion, that you are no better. But to proceed,

Sagacious Moralists, say you, draw Men like Angels, in hopes, that the Pride at least of some, will put them upon copying after the beautiful Originals, which they are represented to be *.

I am loth to charge you with Sagacity, because I would not accuse you falsely, but if this Remark is well made, I can help you to another full as just, viz. *That Sagacious Advocates for Immorality*, draw Men like Brutes, in hopes, that the Depravity at least of some, will put them upon copying after the base Originals, which they are represented to be.

The Province you have chosen for your self, is to deliver Man from the *Sagacity* of Moralists, the Encroachments of Virtue, and to re-place him in the Rights and Privileges of Brutality; to recall him from the giddy Heights of rational Dignity, and Angelick likeness, to go to Grass, or wallow in the Mire.

Had the Excellence of Man's Nature, been only a false Insinuation of crafty Politicians, the very falseness of the thing, had made

made some Men at Peace with it, but this Doctrine coming from Heaven, its being a principle of Religion, and a foundation of solid Virtue, has rouz'd up all this Zeal against it.

And God said, *Let us make Man in our own Image, after our Likeness.*

This was a Declaration of the Dignity of Man's Nature, made long before any of your Sagacious Moralists had a Meeting. As this Doctrine came thus early from Heaven, so in the several Ages of the World, God has had his *Oracles*, and *Prophets*, to raise Mens Thoughts to their first Original; to preserve a Sense of their Relation to God, and Angelick Natures, and encourage them to expect a State of Greatness suitable to that Image after which they were created. To assure *them*, that, *they that sleep in the Dust of the Earth shall awake, some to Everlasting Life, and some to shame and everlasting Contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the Firmament, and they that turn many to Righteousness, as the Stars for ever and ever**.

The last Revelation which God has made to the World, by his Son Jesus Christ, is greatly Glorious in this respect, that it has

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* Dan. xii. 2, 3.

more perfectly brought Life and Immortality to light ; that it turns our Thoughts from the low satisfactions of Flesh and Sense, to press and aspire after that deathless State of Greatness, where we shall be *as the Angels of God.*

It is not therefore the Sagacity and Cunning of any Philosophers that has trick'd Men into Notions of Morality, as a thing suitable to a pretended Dignity of Nature within them.

But it is God himself, who first declared the Excellence of human Nature, and has made so many Revelations since, to fill Mens Minds with high and noble Desires suitable to it,

Before I proceed to consider your *Enquiry into your Origin of moral Virtue*, I shall take Notice of the Apology that you make to Jews and Christians.

You are sensible that what you have said is inconsistent, both with the Old and New Testament, and therefore thus excuse yourself to your scrupulous Reader.

That in *your Enquiry into the Origin of moral Virtue*, you speak neither of *Jews nor Christians*, but *Man in his State of Nature and Ignorance of the true Deity* *.

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The Absurdity of this Apology will appear from hence; Let us suppose that you had been making an *Enquiry into the Origin of the World*, and should declare that it arose from a *casual Concourse of Atoms*, and then tell your scrupulous Reader, by way of Excuse, that you did not mean the World, which *Jews* and *Christians* dwell upon, but that which is inhabited by *Man in his State of Nature and Ignorance of the true Deity*. Could any thing be more weak or senseless than such an Apology? yet it is exactly the same as that which you have here made.

For the difference of *Jew* or *Heathen*, no more supposes or allows of two different *Origins of Morality*, than it supposes or allows of two different *Origins of the World*.

For as the Creation of the World was over, and owing to its true Cause, before the Existence of either *Jew* or *Heathen*, so Morality was in being, and sprung from its proper Source, before either *Jew* or *Heathen* came into the World. And consequently neither the Origin of the one or the other admits of any different Account, because in the after Ages of the World, some People were call'd *Jews*, and others *Heathens*. Besides, if you contradict the Religion of *Jews* and *Christians*, in your Account of Morality, is it less a Contradiction,

dition, or less false, because you pretend that your Face was turn'd towards *Pagans*?

If you was to assert that there was no God, or true Religion, could it be any Excuse, to say that you was speaking to a *Mahometan*?

2dly To defend your Account of the Origin of Morality, you suppose Man in a State of Nature, savage and brutal, without any Notions of Morality or Ideas of Religion.

Now this very Supposition, is so far from being any Apology for you, that it enhances your Accusation: For you suppose such a State of Nature, (as you call it) as the Scripture makes it morally impossible, that Men should ever have been in.

When *Noah's* Family came out of the Ark, we presume, they were as well educated in the Principles of Virtue and moral Wisdom, as any People were ever since; at least we are sure they were well instructed in the true Religion.

There was therefore a Time, when all the People in the World were well vers'd in moral Virtue, and worship'd God according to the true Religion.

He therefore that gives a *later* Account of the Origin of moral Virtue, gives a *false* Account of it.

Now

Now as all parts of the World were by degrees inhabited, by the Descendants of such Ancestors, as were well instructed both in Religion and Morality, it is morally impossible that there should be any Nation of the World, amongst whom there was no Remains of Morality, no Instances of Virtue, no Principles of Religion deriv'd from their Ancestors.

At least it is absolutely impossible for you to shew that there was any such Nation, free from all Impressions of Religion, and Morality. This you can no more do, than you can shew that all the World are not descended from *Adam*.

So that your *Origin of moral Virtue* supposes a State of Man, which the Scriptures make it morally impossible ever to happen, and which it is absolutely impossible for you to shew, that it really did ever happen.

But supposing some of the Posterity of *Noah* in some Corner of the World should have become so degenerate, as to have not the least Remains of Virtue or Religion left amongst them; and suppose some Philosophers should get amongst them, and wheedle and flatter them into some Notions of Morality: could that be call'd an Account of the *Origin* of moral Virtue, when moral Virtue from the beginning of the World had been practis'd and taught,
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by the virtuous Ancestors of such a depraved Offspring?

To make the taming of some such suppos'd Savage Creatures the *Origin of Morality*, is as just a way of thinking, as to make the History of the curing People in *Bedlam*, a true Account of the *Origin of Reason*.

3dly. Your Apology to your scrupulous Reader, as if your Origin of Morality related not to Jews or Christians, is false and absurd.

Because, the Observations, which you have made upon human Nature, on which, your Origin of moral Virtue is founded, are only so many Observations upon the Manners of *all Orders of Christians*. It is their Falseness, Hypocrisie, Pride and Passion, that has induc'd you to consider Morality, as having no rational Foundation in Mans Nature, but as the *political offspring which Flattery begot upon Pride*.

And yet, you *good Man*, are not talking about *Christians* or *Jews*.

But every Page of your Book confutes that Excuse, and indeed needs must; for how should your Observations relate to any but to those People, whose Natures and Practices have furnish'd you with them?

I have, say you, *searched through every Degree and Station of Men*, at last you
tell

tell us, you went to the *Converts*, but even there you found that all was *Farce* and *Hypocrisy* *.

You tell us also, that whoever searches thus deep into *human Nature* will find, *that moral Virtue is the political offspring which Flattery begot upon Pride*. Yet this searching into all Orders of Men, into Convents, and from thence making this Discovery, that Morality is all owing to *Pride* and *Policy*, yet this is not pronouncing any thing upon Christians.

Nothing can be more weak than to form your Opinion of human Nature, upon the Tempers and Practices of all Orders of Christians, and then pretend you are only treating of Man in such a State of Nature, as you never saw one in, in your Life.

For how can your Observations upon Men, under the power of Education, Custom, Laws and Religion, tell you what Man is, in a supposed State, where all these are wanting?

Or will you say that you are acquainted, and intimately acquainted with Men, so entirely divested of all the Ideas of Religion, Morality and Virtue, that you can make their Natures a true Specimen of Man in his most savage, brutal Condition?

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* P. cclxiii.

Tho' your Knowledge of human Nature was great, yet you was forced it seems, to visit the *Convents*, before you could pronounce any thing of them. It seems therefore necessary, in order to know what Creatures Men are in a State of brutality, destitute of all Sense of God and Virtue, that you should know where to visit them.

Again, this *Apology* of yours, happens to be inconsistent with the first and main principle upon which your fine Discourse is founded. I mean your Definition of *Man*, whom you define to be, besides *Skin, Flesh,* and *Bones, &c. a compound of various Passions*. This is the vile, abominable, false, proud *Animal*, that you treat of under the Name of Man. In your Excuse you tell us, this is Man only in a State of *Nature*, but in your Introduction, you tell us, that to forbear complimenting, that Definition belongs both to *your self, and the courteous Reader*.

So that you must either allow, that you and your courteous Readers are all Savages, in an unenlightned State of Nature, or else that the Man you have describ'd, belongs to all Orders of Christians.

Having shewn the weakness and folly of your *Apology*, I proceed now to your more particular Account of the *Origin of moral Virtue*.

You

You are pleas'd to impute its Origin to *Pride* alone, that having the same Cause as fine Cloaths, we may wear as much, or as little as we please, without incurring any greater Offence, than a little variation in Dress.

If *Pride* be the only foundation of Virtue, then the more vicious any one is, the more humble he ought to be esteem'd; and he who is the most humble is at the greatest distance he can be plac'd from moral Virtue. And a perfect Humility (which by most Moralists has been reckon'd a Virtue) must according to this Account, render any one incapable of any Virtue, for such a one not only wants that which you make the only cause of Virtue, but is possess'd of the contrary Quality.

Having carefully consider'd human Nature, you have at last discover'd, that *the moral Virtues are the political offspring which Flattery begot upon Pride,*

You are so fond of this Discovery, that you can't help shewing us how you made it.

The first Moralists or Philosophers, say you, *thoroughly examin'd all the Strength and Frailty of our Nature, and observing that none were either so savage, as not to be charm'd with Praise, or so despicable, as patiently to bear Contempt; justly concluded, that Flattery, must be the powerful*

*Argument that could be used to human Creatures **.

What a Graphilac Description is here! One would think that you had been an Eye witness to all that pass'd, and that you had held the Candle to those first Philosophers when they were so carefully peeping into human Nature. You don't love to dwell upon little Matters, or else you could have told us the Philosopher's Name, who first discover'd this *Flattery*; how long he look'd before he found it; how he prov'd it to be agreeable to Pride; what Disputes happen'd upon the Occasion; and how many Ages of the World had pass'd, before this Consultation of the Philosophers.

But however, you pass on to more material Points: *They*, say you, (that is the Philosophers) *making use of this bewitching Engine, extoll'd the Excellency of our Nature above other Animals, Having by this artful way of Flattery, insinuated themselves into the Hearts of Men, they began to instruct them in the Notions of Honour and Shame,——they laid before them how unbecoming it was the Dignity of such sublime Creatures to be solicitous about gratifying those Appetites, which they had in common with Brutes, &c.*

This

This you take to be a sufficient Proof, *that the moral Virtues are the political offspring which Flattery begot upon Pride.*

I can go no farther till I present you with a fine Speculation of an *Abstract-thinker*, upon the *Origin of the erect posture of Mankind.*

“ It was his Opinion, that the nearer
 “ we search into human Nature, the more
 “ we shall be convinc’d, that walking upon
 “ our Feet with our Body erect, was the
 “ *political offspring which Flattery begot*
 “ *upon Pride.*

“ The first Legislators, says he, having
 “ examined the Strength and Weakness of
 “ Man’s Body, they discover’d, that he was
 “ not so top heavy, but that he might
 “ stand upright on his Feet, but the diffi-
 “ culty was how to raise him up.

“ Some Philosopher more sagacious than
 “ the rest found out, that though Man crept
 “ on the Ground, yet he was made up of
 “ Pride, and that if Flattery took hold of
 “ that, he might easily be set on his Legs.

“ Making use of this bewitching Engine,
 “ they extoll’d the excellency of his Shape
 “ above other Animals, and told him what
 “ a groveling thing it was, to creep on all
 “ four like the meanest Animals.

“ Thus did these first Philosophers shame
 “ poor Man out of his natural State of creep-
 “ ing, and wheedled him into the Digni-

“ ty and Honour of walking upright, to
 “ serve their own ambitious Ends, and that
 “ they might have his Hands to be em-
 “ ploy’d in their Drudgery ”.

This Gentleman being deeply learn’d in the Knowledge of human Nature, has much the same Curiosities, concerning the Origin of Speech, and the first Invention of Truth, which he thinks upon a strict Research into Nature, may very justly be ascrib’d to Pride and Flattery.

But to return to your History. The next Thing your Philosophers did, was this.

In order to introduce an Emulation amongst Men, they divided the whole Species into two Classes, vastly differing from one another. The one consisted of vile groveling Wretches, which they said was the Dross of their Kind, and having only the Shape of Men, differ’d from Brutes only in their outward Figure; but the other Class of Men were made up of high Spirited lofty Creatures.*

Chronology, and Geography, I presume, are Studies not polite enough for your Attention, or else I suppose you would have told us the Time when, and the Place where all this happen’d.

For it is material to know what the World was doing before these Philosophers

* p. xxx.

phers made this Division; whether before this, there was any Fear of God, any Belief of a Providence, any Duty to Parents, any Sense of Equity, any Notions of Faith, or any Regard to Truth.

For if the Enquiry was about the Origin of *Seeing*, or *Hearing*, and you should be ever so exact in telling me the manner how some cunning Philosophers first brought that Matter to bear, I should be very scrupulous about it, unless you told me the Time when, and the Place where they met, what they were doing before, how they came thither, and how they knew when they were there.

Now there is just this same Difficulty in your Account of the *Origin of moral Virtue*.

For, let me tell you, Sir, *moral Virtue* came amongst Men, in the same manner, as *Seeing*, and *Hearing* came amongst them.

Had there ever been a Time, when there was nothing of it in the World, it could no more have been introduc'd, than the Faculties of *Seeing* and *Hearing* could have been contriv'd by Men, who were *blind* and *deaf*.

Were not the first Principles and Reasons of Morality connatural to us, and essential to our Minds, there would have been nothing for the moral Philosophers to have improv'd upon.

Nor

Nor indeed can any Art or Science be form'd, but in such Matters, as where Nature has taken the first Steps her self, and shewn certain Principles to proceed upon.

Perspective supposes an agreement in the different Appearances of Objects.

Musick supposes a confess'd Perception of various Sounds, and *moral Philosophy* supposes an acknowledg'd difference of Good and Evil.

Were we not all naturally *Mathematicians* and *Logicians*, there would be no such Sciences; for Science is only an improvement of those first Principles or Ways of thinking which Nature has given us.

Take away the Mathematicians *Postulata*, or those first Elements and Principles of Reason, which are allow'd by the common Sense of Mankind; and were Philosophers even as cunning as your self, they must give up all the Science.

Do but suppose *all* to be invented, and then it will follow that *nothing* could be invented in any Science.

It is thus in all Sciences, the rationality of our Nature contains the first Rules, or Principles, and it is the Speculation of Man that builds and enlarges upon them.

As the Mathematician, seeing the acknowledg'd Differences and Proportions of Lines and Figures, proceeded upon them
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to enlarge Men's Knowledge in such matters; so the moral Philosophers, seeing the acknowledg'd Difference between Right and Wrong, Good and Evil, which the common Reason of Man consented to, they proceeded to enlarge and improve upon them,

So that their Labours are but Speculations and Harangues upon those common Principles of Morality, which were as con-natural to the Reason of Man, as the first Principles of any other Science.

Moral Philosophy may be compar'd to *Eloquence*; it is an Improvement upon the common Reason of Man, as *Eloquence* is an Improvement upon Speech.

Now should some *Connossieur* take it into his Head to enquire into the *Origin of Speech*, and tell the World, " That once
 " upon a time, some *Orators* seeing that
 " Man had something in his Mouth, by
 " the Movement of which, he could make
 " a particular Sound; they told him of the
 " Dignity and Honour of uttering such
 " Sounds, and so through the pride of his
 " Nature taught the *Animal* to speak, tho'
 " in reality, it was neither natural to him,
 " nor any true Excellence; but ambitious
 " Men flatter'd him into it, that he might
 " be the fitter to go on their Errands".

Should any profound Thinker give this
Account of the *Origin of Speech*, you would
 have

have a Right to say, that he had stole the Discovery from you, who have given us just the same false and ridiculous Account of the *Origin* of Morality.

For it is full as reasonable, to make Eloquence the *Origin* of forming *articulate Sounds*, as to make the Harangues or Labours of moral Philosophers, the *Origin* of *moral Virtue*.

Could it be suppos'd, that an Understanding so *fine* as yours, cou'd be convey'd to your *Descendants*, and that you should ever have a *Grandson* as *wise* as your self: It may be expected that he will be able to teach that Generation of Men, that *Seeing*, was first introduc'd into the World, by Sir *Isaac Newton's* Treatise upon *Opticks*.

To enquire into the Origin of moral Virtue, is to enquire into the Origin of *Reason*, *Truth*, and the *Relations* of Things.

And to fancy that some Politicians contriv'd moral Virtue, is to fancy that some Politician contriv'd *Reason* and *Truth*, and invented the difference between one Action and another.

There is nothing that began to be, but what may be destroy'd or cease to be; but as *Truth* and *Reason* can never cease to be, so it implies a Contradiction in terms, for *Truth* and *Reason* ever to have had a Beginning.

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It is the same in moral Virtue, which is *Truth* and *Reason*, consider'd in relation to Actions; and the difference between one Action and another, is as immutable and eternal, as the difference between one Line and another, and can no more be destroy'd.

As *things* are different by their own proper Natures, independant of our Wills, so *Actions* have their own peculiar Qualities from themselves, and not from our Thoughts about them. In these immutable Qualities of Actions, is founded, the fitness and reasonableness of them, which we can no more alter, than we can change the Proportions or Relations of Lines and Figures.

And it is no more the *Pride* of Man, that has made this difference between *Actions*, than it is the *Pride* of Man, that makes the difference between a *Circle* and a *Square*.

Moral Virtue therefore, if consider'd in it self, as the Rule or Law of intelligent Beings, had *no Origin*; that is, there never was a time when it began to be; but it is as much without beginning as Truth and Goodness, which are in their Natures as Eternal as God.

But Moral Virtue, if consider'd, as the Object of Man's Knowledge, began with the first Man, and is as natural to him, as it is natural to Man to think and perceive,

or feel the difference between Pleasure and Pain.

For his rational Nature, as much implies a fitness to perceive a difference in Actions, as to Right and Wrong, as it implies a fitness to perceive a difference in things as to great and small, pleasing or painful.

It may now be enquired, whether this moral Virtue be our *Law*, and how it appears, that we are under any Obligations to behave our selves, according to this difference of *Right* and *Wrong* that appears in Actions.

Now the reasonableness and fitness of Actions themselves is a Law to rational Beings, and the sight of that reasonableness carries an Obligation.

The different magnitude of things, is a Reason to us, to acknowledge such Difference; and He that affirms any thing contrary to the sight of his Mind, offends against the Law of his Nature.

The different natures of *Actions*, is a Reason for us to act according to such Differences, and He who does any thing contrary to the sight of his Mind in that respect, sins against the Law of his Nature.

Now that this is not an imaginary Obligation, or a Law fanfy'd by Moralists, may appear from hence; that this is a Law to which even the Divine Nature is subject; for God is necessarily Just and Good, not
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from any external Force, but from the Excellency of Justice and Goodness. *Reason* is his Law because it is *Reason*. That therefore which is a Law to God because of its Excellency, must surely be a *Law* to all Beings whom he has created capable of discerning that Excellency. For if the Reason or Excellence of the thing, be of sufficient Force to determine the Action of God, certainly it ought not to be thought too little to determine us in our Actions.

Nor can that be said to be an imaginary speculative Law to intelligent Beings, which is an inviolable Law to the most perfect, intelligent Nature.

2dly, It is the Will of God, that makes moral Virtue our Law, and obliges us to act reasonably.

If you ask how this Will of God appears, I must beg leave at present, only to suppose, that God is of infinite Justice, and Goodness, and Truth; and then the thing proves it self: For such a God must necessarily Will, that all his Creatures in their several Proportions, be Just and Good, and True.

Few Mathematical Demonstrations conclude stronger than this. There is only one Objection to be made against it, which is to suppose, that God is neither Just or True.

If rather then yield, you will put the *Epicurean* upon me, and say that God may disregard us, and neither Will one way, nor the other. It may be answer'd, that this is inconsistent with the Idea of God just laid down; for a God of infinite Goodness and Truth, can no more fail to Will Goodness and Truth in *every Instance*, than an infinite Being can fail to be present in every Place, or an omnipotent Being be deficient in any Acts of Power. So that it is absolutely necessary to say, either that God, is not of infinite Goodness and Truth, or to allow that He requires all his Creatures in their several Capacities, to be Just, and True, and Good.

Here, Sir, is the Noble and Divine Origin of moral Virtue, it is founded in the immutable Relations of Things, in the Perfections and Attributes of God, and not in the *Pride* of Man, or the Craft of cunning Politicians.

As the Reasons and Obligations to moral Virtue have always been in being, so has Mankind always had Sight of them: It being as essential and natural, for a rational Being to perceive these differences of Actions, as it is for an extended Being to occupy Space.

And the Creation of a rational Nature, as much implies a Sight of the reasonableness of things, as the Creation of an extended

tended Being, implies its Possession of so much Space.

Matter of Fact also supports this Observation : For History tells us of no Age or Country, where Men have not agreed to ascribe, Justice, Goodness and Truth, to the Supreme Being.

Now this shews, that they always not only knew, what Goodness, Justice and Truth were, but also that they took them to be such excellent Qualities, as ought to be ascrib'd to the highest and best Being.

How monstrous is it therefore, to impute these fine moral Virtues to the Contrivance of Politicians, when all Ages of the World have agreed to ascribe them to God, and number them amongst his glorious Attributes.

God is Just, therefore there is such a thing as Justice, independent of the Will and Contrivance of Man, is a way of reasoning that cannot be refuted.

It is in vain to say, that there may be a Divine Justice and Goodness, and yet what we call Goodness and Justice amongst Men may be only a human Contrivance.

For to this it may be answer'd, that we cannot ascribe any thing to God, of which we have not some Conception our selves. Did we not perceive some degrees of Wisdom, we could not call him *All wise*; did we not feel Power, and understand what it is,

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we could not ascribe *Omnipotence* to God. For our Idea of God is only form'd by adding *infinite* to every Perfection that we have any Knowledge of.

So that had we not from the rationality of our Nature, as plain a Sight of Justice, Goodness and Truth, as we have of *Power*, *Existence*, or any thing else, we could not attribute them to God.

That we are rational Beings, is as plain, as that we have Bodies, and bodily Senses. As there is no Man so refin'd and elevated, but gives frequent Proof, that He is subject also to Instincts and Passions; so there is no one so addicted to an Animal Life, as to shew no Signs of an higher Principle within him.

It is this rationality of our Nature, that makes us both capable of, and oblig'd to practise moral Virtue, and brings us into a kind of Society with God and all other intelligent Beings.

For our Reason gives us a share in that common Light, which all intelligent Beings enjoy, and by making us Partakers of the same Things, so far makes us of one Society.

By our Reason we know some Truths, which God, and all intelligent Beings know; and apprehend some Perfections, and different Qualities in Things and Actions, which all intelligent Beings apprehend.

Now

Now by being let into this Region of Truth, by being able to see some Truths which God also sees, and to know some Perfections which he also knows, we are as plainly declar'd to be rational Beings, and that Reason is one Law of our Nature; as the Principles of Flesh and Blood shew us to be Animals, and subject to the Instincts of an Animal Life.

For how weak is it to suppose, that the *Animal* Life should be the Foundation of Laws of Nature, so as to make it fit for us to act agreeable to its Wants and Desires; and that the *Rationality* of our *Beings*, which is, in some degree, a Likeness to God, should be the Foundation of no Laws of Nature, so as to make it fit for us to act suitable to its Perfection and Happiness.

The short is this, *Truth* and *Reason* is the Law by which God acts; Man is, in some degree, made a Partaker of that Truth and Reason; therefore it is a Law to him also. The more we act according to Order, Truth and Reason, the more we ~~make~~ our selves like God, who is Truth and Reason it self.

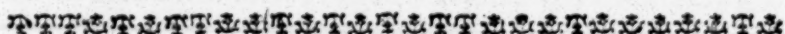
This is the strong and immoveable Foundation of *moral Virtue*, having the same Certainty as the Attributes of God. —

Away then, I beseech you, with your idle and prophane Fancies about the *Origin*
of

of moral Virtue. For once turn your Eyes towards Heaven, and dare but to own a just and good God, and then you have own'd the true Origin of Religion and moral Virtue.

Thus much will, I presume, be thought sufficient to vindicate the Excellency and Obligations of *moral Virtue* from the false and impious Accounts you have given of its Origin.

I proceed to consider in the next place some other Methods that are made use of to render *moral Virtue* odious and contemptible.



S E C T. II.

TH E most boasted Objection against the Reality of Virtue which is urged by Men, who appropriate the Knowledge of human Nature to themselves, is this, that no Action is perform'd by us thro' a *Love of Goodness*, or upon a rational Principle of Virtue, but that it is *Complexion, natural Temper, Education, Pride, Shame*, or some other blind Impulse that moves us in all our Actions that have the Appearance of Virtue. Thus a Man who relieves an Object of Compassion, only gratifies his *commiserating Temper*; he is subject to *Pity, which is a Frailty of our Natures, and of which the weakest Minds have generally the greatest Share,*

Share, as may be seen in Women and Children. Again, the humblest Man alive, say you, must confess, that the Reward of a virtuous Action, which is the Satisfaction that ensues upon it, consists in a certain Pleasure he procures to himself in contemplating his own Worth; which Pleasure, together with the Occasion of it, are as certain Signs of Pride, as looking pale and trembling at any imminent Danger are the Symptoms of Fear†.*

Now, Sir, if this be a true Account of the *humblest Men alive*, then, by the Rule of Contraries, this must be a true Account of the *proudest Man alive*, that the Satisfaction he enjoys in being so, consists in a certain Pleasure he procures to himself by contemplating his own Vileness.

This accurate Description you have given us of the *Pleasure of the humblest Man alive*, must be owing to such a feeling Sense as the *blind Man* had of *Light*, who being ask'd what it was like; answer'd, that it was like the *Sound of a Trumpet*.

But to consider this Charge against human Virtue, that it is nothing but Education, natural Temper, or Complexion; this being so labour'd a Point, I shall state the whole Matter as clearly as I can.

1st, It is granted, that an Action is only then virtuous when it is perform'd, because

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* p. xlii.

† p. xliii.

it is agreable to Reason, and those Laws which God requires us to observe.

Now this Virtue is Man's Duty, not as a Task that is impos'd upon him, but as it is the only Practice, that is, the natural Pleasure and proper Good of his being.

Virtue having that natural Fitness to a rational Soul that fine Sights have to the Eye, or harmonious Sounds to the Ear.

A rational Being is in order, in its right State and Frame, when it is acting reasonably.

The infinite Goodness of God makes him infinitely happy, and the Perfection of every Being is its Happiness, and the greater and more perfect the Virtue of any one is, the more perfect is his Happiness.

Now it is here to be observ'd, that an Action is not less virtuous, or loses any of its Excellency, because the Soul is delighted and made happy by it; for it is the very Nature of Virtue to produce such Effects, and it shews the Rectitude of the Soul, when it can act virtuously with Delight, and feel its Happiness in so doing.

This is being virtuous upon Principle, and thro' a *Love of Goodness*; for Goodness is lov'd for itself, when it is lov'd for what it is, the true Good and proper Delight of a rational Being.

Now will any one say that there is no Excellence in Virtue, that it is mere *Nature* and

and *Temper*, because it is so agreeable, so proper to our rational Natures? Then let him say there is no Excellence in the Goodness and Justice of God, because it is so suitable to his Nature, and constitutes his Happiness.

Granting therefore that Virtue was its own Reward, as it elevates and perfects the Soul, and keeps it in a State of right enjoyment, it would not be the less reasonable, on that Account.

For Happiness is the only reasonable *End* of every Being.

An Action is not good, or virtuous, because it is *Self-denial*, but because it is according to Duty; and he who thro' long habits of Goodness, has made the Practice of Virtue to have less of Self-denial in it, is the most virtuous Man.

Now, it is no Objection against the *Reality* of Goodness, that as rational Beings, we are *naturally* and *complexionally* dispos'd to practise and delight in it; or that this natural Disposition, may by Exercise, Meditation, and Habits be heighten'd and encreas'd.

For Custom, Habit, and natural Temper are proper Assistances of our most virtuous Actions, and cannot be said to make them less reasonable, unless it be a Fault or Imperfection, to be habitually and strongly dispos'd to Goodness;

Thus much therefore is true of us consider'd only as *rational Beings*; that we must even in that State be by Nature and Temper form'd to perceive Pleasure, from some particular ways of acting; and that the very excellence of our Natures, consists in a Fitness and Disposition for virtuous Actions, which the more we improve and strengthen by Meditation and Habit, the more reasonable we make our selves,

It has pleas'd God in the Formation of Man, so to unite this rational Nature to a Body of Flesh and Blood, that they shall generally act together; and that the Soul shall as well be influenc'd by bodily Instincts, and Motions of the Blood and Spirits, as by its own Thoughts and Reflections.

Thus, a delightful Thought conceiv'd ever so secretly in the Mind, shall at its first Conception, have the Blood and Spirits joyn in the Pleasure.

So that every right Judgment of the Mind, every proper Aversion or regular Love, has as much the Concurrence of the Blood and Spirits, as if they were the only Agents.

The Body being thus visible an Agent in all that we do, has made some weak Heads imagine, that we are nothing else but Body; As from the same want of Thought some have concluded, that there is nothing besides the material World, because nothing else is obvious to their Eyes.

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The Soul being thus united to the Body, no Act of the Man is less reasonable, or virtuous, because it has the Concurrence of the Blood and Spirits: For this was the Intendment of the Union, that a Creature of such a Form, should exert its Instincts and Passions in conformity to Reason. For Instance,

Suppose any one, should meditate upon the Attributes and Perfections of God, till the great Idea had rais'd and warm'd his Spirits: tho' the Reflection is then supported by the Agitation of bodily Spirits, yet the Meditation is not less religious, or less devout, or reasonable, because the Heat of bodily Spirits assisted in it.

Suppose any one should so often reflect upon an eternal state of Darkness, and Separation from God, till his Blood and Spirit joyn in increasing the Horror; such an Horror would not be less reasonable, because the Body join'd in keeping it up.

The Mechanical Influence which our Spirits and temperament have upon our Actions, does not take away from the reasonableness of them, any more than the rational Frame of our Minds, which is naturally dispos'd to acquiesce in the reason of things, destroys the reasonableness of Actions.

As it would be no Excellence in a pure thinking Being, to be equally inclin'd to Truth or Falshood, so it would add no Merit to such a mixt Nature as ours is, if
our

our Bodily temperaments were neither more or less inclin'd to, or delighted with one sort of Actions than another.

Let us only suppose, that a rational Soul and an animal Nature, were united to act in a State of Personality.

It cannot be, that the reasonableness of its Actions should be impair'd by the Body's appearing to have a share in them, because, it does not act according to its Nature, unless the Body does concur; and in such a mixt Being, it is no more requir'd that its Actions should be perform'd abstractly by pure Reason, than it is allow'd that its Motions should be merely Animal.

Yet this is the false Judgment which Men, who are not the greatest Friends of Virtue, make, because the Influence of the animal Nature is visible in the best of Men; and because such Enquirers generally converse intimately only with the worst, they rashly conclude against *all Force* of Principle, and deny Reason to have *any* Share in our Actions.

From what has been said, we may easily support the *Reality* of Virtue from all the Objections of these *Criticks* upon human Nature.

For, granting the Force of Education, the Power of Custom, and the Influence of our bodily Instincts and Tempers; yet nothing can thence be concluded against the
Share

Share that Reason and Principle are requir'd to have in our Actions.

For both Reason and Religion direct us to use the Influence and Assistance of all these Helps ; and consequently they no more lessen or take from the Reality of virtuous Actions, when we are assisted by them, than *Fasting* or *Prayer* make our Piety less excellent, because it was assisted by them.

And it is as suitable to our Natures to strengthen and establish our Virtue, by Education, Custom, Complexion, and bodily Instincts, as it is suitable to Religion, to improve and heighten it by Fasting and Prayer.

And he who says, that such or such Actions have no Principle of Virtue or Religion in them, because they are made easy by Education, Temper and Practice, thinks as weakly, as if he should affirm, that such Actions have no Reality of Principle in them, because they are the Effects of Meditation, and Habits of Attention ; for good Habits of Body no more lessen the Excellence of Virtue, than good Habits of Mind.

An Action is virtuous, because it is an Obedience to Reason, and the Laws of God ; and does not cease to be so, because the Body is either form'd by Use, or created by Disposition, easy and ready for the Performance of it

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A good Education would be a Sin, if the Benefit that is received from it, or the Facility of performing good Actions, took away from their Goodness.

Nay, all Habits of Virtue would, upon this foot, be blameable, because such Habits must be suppos'd to have render'd both Body and Mind more ready and exact in Goodness.

All these Absurdities necessarily follow from this Argument, that there is no virtuous Principle in our good Actions, because Custom, Education, Temper, and Complexion, have their Share in them.

2dly, This Objection against the Reality of Virtue, is rather a Calumny, than any just Charge against it.

For, as it is as certain, that we think and reason, as that we are subject to bodily Instincts and Habits, nothing can prove that our Reason and Reflection do not principally concur in any Action, but the Impossibility of it. He therefore that would prove that my Mind does not act upon a Principle of Reason, where he thinks that Temper or Complexion may carry me thro' it, can never prove it, till he can shew that there was no Principle of Reason, no proper Motive, no Precept of Duty to move me to it: For if there be a plain Reason in the Thing, if there be a Precept of Duty to
excite

excite my Mind, as well as a natural Disposition in my Temper to perform the Action, it is impossible for the most penetrating Genius to prove that my Temperament had a greater Share in the Action, than the Reason of my Mind; and consequently this Objection is a mere Calumny, and an ill-natur'd Suspicion, which can never prove it self to be justly made.

Now, that Reason is the chief Principle in the Performance of good Actions, may, in some degree, be learnt from hence, That reasonable and wise Actions never occasion any Sorrow or Repentance in the Mind; but, on the contrary, in violent Actions, where the Fermentation of the Blood and Spirits may be suppos'd to have blindly hurried on the Action, that Fermentation is no sooner abated, but there arises a Pain in the Mind, and Reason condemns the Action; which Condemnation chiefly consists in this, that Reason had not the Guidance of it; which is a plain Confession, that it is the way of our Nature to have Reason govern the Instincts and Motions of the Spirits, and that she shrinks and is uneasy at those Actions where she was not the principal Agent.

If therefore Actions only satisfy and content us, by being approv'd by our Reason, it is a manifest Proof that our Reason is the principal Agent in our good Actions.

Nor will it be any Objection to this, to say, that many People are satisfy'd with false Notions of Virtue and Religion; for this only shews that the Principle of Reason may be weak, and of very little discerning Force in some People; but still it is their Faculty of Reason, such as it is, that gives them Peace, when it presides; and it is living contrary to Reason, that gives them Pain, as it gives Pain to others who enjoy a more enlighten'd Mind.

If the religious *Turk* abhors the Abomination of Wine, it cannot be said, that such Abhorrence is only the Effect of Temper, bodily Instincts, and Custom; unless it could be shewn that he would equally abhor it, tho' he was fully persuaded that *Mahomet* was a Cheat.

From this Account of human Nature, we may be able to reject all those Reproaches which are cast upon Virtue and Religion, as if they were never founded upon any rational Principle, but were the casual blind Effect of Custom, Education, Temper, or Complexion.

1st. As it appears, that in our rational Natures, we are naturally and complexio-
nally form'd to practise and delight in rea-
sonable Actions, and that such a Tendency
of Temper or Nature towards Virtue, no
more lessens the Excellency of it, than the
Rectitude

Rectitude of God's Nature, takes away the Excellence of his Actions.

2^{dly}, That Actions are not less virtuous for being suitable to any Disposition, whether natural or acquir'd, than for being suitable to the Reason of the Mind.

3^{dly}, That *Education, Custom, Habits, Complexion, &c.* Are so far from taking away the Reasonableness of our Actions, that we could not be said to act reasonably, unless we endeavour'd to make a greater Progress in Virtue by their Assistance.

4^{thly}, That it is impossible, even in those Actions; where *Custom, Education, Complexion, and Habit* seem to be in full Power, for any one to prove that Reason and Principle have not the greatest Share in them.

5^{thly}, That Peace of Mind, which attends our good Actions, is a plain Proof of the Power which our Reason had in the Performance of them.

To come now to a particular Instance or Two.

1st. *Philo's Charity and Compassion* is no Virtue, you say, because it is mere *Complexion and Temper*; he gratifies his *Pity*,

and acts in Conformity to his Blood and Spirits.

Now this is so far from proving that he has not the Virtue of Charity, that it might be urg'd as a Proof of his having it.

For his Body is in that Disposition that it should be, supposing that his Mind had been long exercis'd and endued with Habits of Charity; it gives that farther Pleasure in charitable Acts, which the right Turn of the Instincts, and Blood and Spirits, should give to the Mind in every virtuous Action.

For as I have observ'd, Man is then in his best State, when the Course of the Blood and Spirits act in Concurrence with his Reason; so that when my Body, with its *Instincts* and *Motions*, joyns with the right Judgments of my Mind, what I so perform has all the Perfection that an human Creature is able to exert.

This Complexion, therefore, or bodily Disposition towards charitable Acts, is so far from implying that therefore the Mind has no Share in the Action, that were the Mind in its best State, and in its full Power, (as at first created) it would use a greater and more constant Concurrence of all bodily Tempers in the Performance of her Duty.

So that when Complexion, or bodily Temperament readily joyn in the Performance

manee of good Actions, this is so far from implying any Defect of Principle, or want of rational Motive, that it shews, in some degree, the Remains of that primitive Rectitude of Body and Mind before the *Fall*.

2dly, To say that *Philo's* Charity is mere Complexion, is a Calumny, and groundless Accusation; it is a Suspicion as ill-grounded, as if I was to suspect that a Man had no Pride in his Mind, because there appear'd an Haughtiness in his Carriage; or no Humility within, because of a natural Lowliness without: It is a Suspicion thus founded against all the Appearances of Truth, and is forc'd to make those the Proofs of the Absence of a Thing, which are the natural Signs of its Presence.

And as it is thus unreasonable, so is it utterly impossible that it should ever justify it self.

For seeing it is not only possible, but natural for this complexional Disposition to act in Conformity to the internal Principle of the Mind, it can never be proved that it does not.

It can never be proved, that Reason and Religion have not a greater Share in *Philo's* Charity, than his Complexion. How far some Precept of Religion, some Principle of Reason may influence his Mind, cannot be known by the most sagacious Philosopher; there-

therefore the Charge against his Charity, as the mere Effect of Complexion, must be always ill-natur'd, unjust, and groundless.

Farther, granting that *Philo* was complexionally disposed to Pity and Compassion, even before he could be supposed to act upon a Principle of Virtue and Religion; yet even this Supposition will make nothing against it afterwards,

For will any one argue, that a Man can never fear, love, or hate, upon Principles of Reason, because Children fear, love, and hate, before Reason is of any Force to direct them?

Yet this is as wise, as to suppose that a Man's Complexion is never made to concur with a Principle of Reason, because such Complexion appear'd, before Reason could be supposed of sufficient Power to guide it.

As to what you say, that *Pity is as much a Frailty of our Nature, as Anger, Pride, &c. That the weakest Minds have generally the greatest Share of it, for which Reason none are more compassionate than Women and Children**.

Two Things may be observ'd, First, the Inconsistency of this Assertion with the rest of your Book,

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Here you derive the Compassion of Women, from a supposed *Weakness of Mind*; which supposes, that their *Tempers* depend upon their Minds, and are subject to them, and influenc'd by them; tho' in this very Page, you make *Pity* to be only an *Impulse of Nature*, and it be your chief Design throughout your Book to shew, that all our *Tempers* and *Passions* are mere Mechanism, and *Constitution*, founded only in the Temper and Tone of our bodily Spirits.

So that according to your deep Philosophy, *Pity* is only an Impulse of Nature, and bodily Temper; yet Women are more pitiful than Men, because they have (as you suppose) *weaker Minds*.

That is, their Minds, because *weak*, have a Power over their *Tempers*, and form their Dispositions; but Mens Minds being *strong*, have no such Power.

To what Temper of Mind such Philosophy as this is to be imputed, need not be observ'd.

2dly, To say that Woman have the *weakest Minds*, is saying more than you are able to prove. If they are more inclin'd to Compassion, through a Tendernefs of Nature, it is so far from being a *Weakness of their Minds*, that it is a right Judgment, assisted,

assisted, or made more easy by a happy Tenderness of their Constitutions.

And it is owing, perhaps, to this *Make* of their Spirits, that they are commonly more affected with the Truths of Religion; than the Generality of Men are.

When our Minds are once soften'd, by whatever Cause it is, we are generally in the best Disposition for the Impressions of Religion; so that *Pity* is so far from being *as much a Frailty*, as *Pride* and *Anger*, that they are as different in their Effects, as a *Heart of Flesh* and a *Heart of Stone*, which Holy Scripture makes as different as a *Blessing* and a *Curse*.

But to return (if this be a Digression) to my Subject.

Let us now farther suppose, that *Philo's* Charity is greatly owing to his Nature and Complexion; that the quality of his Spirits began the Disposition, and helped to recommend this Virtue to the Mind; yet may such a Virtue be as truly rational and religious, as if it had been let into the Mind any other way,

Sickness, *Poverty*, and *Distress*, have a natural Tendency to correct our Follies, and convert our Minds towards our true Good. These Conditions of Life may make it as easy for a Man to be *humble* and *compassionate*, as any Bodily Complexion whatever; yet is such *Humility* and *Compassion* not to be

be esteem'd void of Principle or Reason, because such Causes contributed towards them, and led the Mind into them.

For the Mind is acting according to the truest Principles of Reason and Religion, when it makes Advantage of these external Helps, and turns *Ease* and *Pain*, *Sickness* and *Health*, into occasional Causes of greater Piety.

Nor is it any more a Diminution of the Reality of *Philo's* Charity, to say, that bodily Temper first prepar'd and inclin'd his Mind towards it, than it is a Diminution of the Reality of one's *Repentance*, to say, that it was some Misfortune or cross Accident that first disposed and fitted his Mind for it.

David said (without fear of destroying the Reality of his Piety) *It is good for me, that I have been afflicted.*

Now if Actions, or Ways of Life may be good, tho' Afflictions contributed towards them, surely they may be equally good, tho' some Bodily Tempers proved in some degree the Occasions of them.

And it is as consistent with true and real Virtue, to owe its Rise to some bodily Constitution or Temper, as it is consistent with solid and substantial Piety, to owe its Beginning to some particular Calamity or Action of God's Providence.

But to proceed: It is farther objected, that *Philo's* Charity must be mere *Complexion*,

and not Virtue ; for if it were Virtue, he would not allow himself in the Neglect of other Duties.

This, again, is a false Conclusion? for a Man may perform one Duty upon a Principle of Virtue, and Sense of Duty, and yet thro' Mistake, or Negligence, be deficient in others.

Such great Judges of human Nature, should consider, that even in worldly Affairs, a Man does not always act up to the same Principle in every thing he does.

Will any one say, that *Avarus* does not consider Gain, when he is making Bargains, because at some other Times he seems not to value Expence?

If not, why then must *Philo* be look'd upon as not *at all* influenc'd by a Sense of Duty in his Acts of Charity, because at some other Times and Occasions, he seems not to be govern'd by it.

Our present State, is a State of great Weakness and Imperfection, and our Reason, weak as it is, has a Thousand Impediments to hinder and divert its Force. In the Affairs of Civil Life, we are neither perfectly wise, nor wholly foolish; and we are almost the same Men in the Things that relate to God. In some Instances, Reason and Religion get more Power over us, and guide us under a Sense of Duty; whilst in other Parts of our Life, it may be very apparent

parent that Reason has a less Share in our Actions.

But to conclude that Reason, or a Principle of Virtue, does not influence us in any Part of our Behaviour, because it does not act equally and constantly in every other Part of our Lives ; is as absurd, as to affirm, that we don't *think* at all in any Thing that we do, because we don't *think* with the same Exactness or Attention in every Thing that is done by us.

If *Philo* lives in the Neglect or Violation of some Duties, this shews that he is a weak, imperfect Man ; but it does not shew that he is the *same* weak and imperfect Man, and as devoid of any Principle of Virtue, when he does his Duty, as where he neglects it : For it is as possible for him to be charitable upon a Principle of Duty, and yet fail in some other Respects, as it is possible for a Man to use his Reason in some Things, and not in others ; or to reason right in some Points, and yield to Folly in others.

So that to impute Actions seemingly virtuous, solely to natural *Temper* or *Complexion*, or some other blind Motive, because the Man is not uniform in his Life, is groundless and absurd ; all that can with any Truth be affirm'd of such a Man, is this, that he is not uniform in his Actions, and that thro' some Mistake, or Negligence,

he is not so careful of his Duty in some Respects as in others.

Our *Understanding* and *Reason*, even in Matters of mere Speculation, is well-nigh as weak and inconstant, as in Points of Duty and Conscience.

Few Systems of Philosophy, but obtrude some Errors upon us with as much Assurance, as they affirm the Truth: *Descartes* asserted a *Plenum*; Sir *Isaac Newton* has proved a *Vacuum*.

Now will any one say, that it was not the *Reason* or *Understanding* of *Descartes* that demonstrated so many solid Truths, because he yielded to Falsity and Error in the Doctrine of a *Plenum*? Yet it would be much more reasonable to affirm this, in Matters of mere Speculation, than to affirm, that in Points of Practice and Duty, a Man is in *no Actions* govern'd by *Reason* and *Principle*, because in *some* Instances he acts weakly, and not according to Reason.

For, produce but the true Reason why a Philosopher may be said to proceed in some Speculations according to strict Reason and Truth, and yet hold some Tenets contrary to them, and then you will shew that it is possible, nay, highly probable, that a Man may, in some Points of Duty, act upon a Principle of Reason and Virtue, though in some Things he may swerve from them.

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There is, I acknowledge, a great Difference in bodily Temperaments ; so that one Man may be born with better Dispositions for the Practice of some Virtues than others, yet it is Reason within, that is the chief Principle that actuates all of them ; for the *finest Spirits* are things as blind and senseless of themselves, as the *Hands* and *Feet*, or the groffer Parts of the Body.

Wit and *Understanding*, depend much upon bodily Temperaments ; yet who is so weak as to imagine, that therefore the Reason of the Mind has no Share in Arts and Sciences.

It is the same in *Virtue*, or at least, as to some particular Virtues ; there may be a kind Disposition in the animal Spirits to produce them, but it is great Weakness to suppose that Reason and Judgment, have no Part in them.

It is impossible for our stinted Capacities to explain or calculate the *exact* Powers, that are to be attributed to our Souls and Bodies in the Performance of Actions, because we have no clear Ideas of them ; but we know enough to affirm the united Operation of both, and to shew that he reasons falsely, who would ascribe an Action wholly to the Body, because it appears to have some Share in it ; because, supposing it to take its Rise wholly from *Reason*, the Union of the Soul and Body requires, that the Body should appear

appear to have the same Part in the production of the Action.

There is nothing more various, imperceptible, or more out of our Sight, than the Motives of human Actions. We know no more how *Arguments, Opinions*, act upon the Mind, or how far they contribute to our *Choices*, than we can tell how far the *Air*, and how far the *Sun* operates in the Growth of Plants.

When a Free-Thinker asserts, that our *religious Beliefs and Persuasions are not at all the Causes of human Actions*, he proceeds upon as good Grounds, as if he had said that *Air is not at all* the Cause of the Circulation of the Blood.

For it is as easy to shew that *Air* has no Influence upon our Bodies, as that *Reason and Opinions* have no Power over our Minds.

And it is more possible to tell how far the *Fluids*, and how far the *Solids* in an human Body contribute to bodily Action, than it is to affirm how far *Opinions and Judgments*, and how far *Temper and Complexion* operate in human Actions.

Nay, these Gentlemen, themselves, to make their Philosophy still more ridiculous, are frequently wondering at the strange and monstrous *Contradictions*, which they think they discover in human Nature.

As

As if they should say, that finding human Nature to be *unaccountable*, they therefore take upon them to give *certain* and *positive* Accounts of its manner of acting.

I shall be pardon'd for insisting so long upon this Article, because it is that on which some celebrated *Wits* have spent so much Pains, to the Prejudice of Religion and Morality. It is not easy to imagine the fatal Effects that Mr. *Bayle's* and *Esprit's* Writings have had upon People's Minds, by denying the Power of *Reason* and *Religion*, and ascribing all human Actions to *Complexion*, *natural Temper*, &c.

It is an easy Thing to be a *Wit*, and a *Philosopher*, if you will but write against Religion and Virtue; for I need not say all Arguments, but all Fancies, are admitted as Demonstrations on that Side; and the bolder Steps you take, the surer you are of being esteem'd a *Genius*.

Had Mr. *Bayle* fill'd his Books with the most useful, noble Truths, he had not had half so many Admirers, as for one single Sentence, which the most thoughtless Rake might have said through the mere Assurance of his own Extravagancies.

Speaking of *Fornication*, *I question*, says he, *whether one Man in a Hundred is clear of the Guilt*.

Could he have said a more extravagant Thing, that had reflected more upon Morality,

rality, and the Power of Religion, he had still been more admired. It is thus that Mr. *Bayle* and *Esprit* have purchased the Esteem, and increased the Numbers of Infidels and Libertines.

These Gentlemen are dead, and their Ashes safe, if the Death of Men implies no more than the Fall of Leaves.

What Reasons you have to appear in the same Cause of Immorality, or what Security you have against the Power of God, is, I dare say, not known to your self.

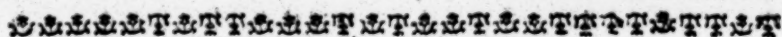
Infidelity and Irreligion have few Topicks for Reflection, they have not so much as one Argument on their side.

You can no more shew that you are not immortal, than you can shew what was doing before the Creation of the World.

To fancy that all expires with the Body, is as well supported, as if you was to fancy that there are no Beings but what are visible to your Eyes. To suppose that Man will never be called to an Account, is as much to be depended upon, as if you supposed that there will be nothing in Being a Thousand Years hence.

Yet these are the *strong Foundations* of Infidelity and Prophaneness, these are the *solid Principles* upon which great *Philosophers* establish, deluded, (or as they call themselves) *Free-Thinkers*.

A Revelation from God, that justifies it self from the Creation of the World; that tells you every Truth that a wise Man would be glad to hear; that is supported with all the Authority that an omnipotent God can give; that is confirm'd with all the Assurance that human Testimony can afford, is of no Weight against a few bold Assertions of weak Mortals, who exceed their Fellow-Creatures only in Arrogance and Presumption.



S E C T. II.

ONE would imagine, by what has already pass'd, that you had sufficiently vented your Passion upon moral Virtue, and that you had hardly any more Arrows to draw against it; but you proceed to shew us, that however you may fail in Argument, you will never be wanting in Inclination to attack it.

You set your self with an Air of Satisfaction, as if Morality and Religion lay at your Feet, *to examine into the Pulchrum and Honestum of the Antients*; that is, *to enquire whether there be any real Excellency or Worth in Things, a Pre-eminence of one Thing above another* *.

H

And

* p. cccclxxiii.

And to shew that there is no such Thing as any real Worth or Excellency in Things or Actions, but that all is mere Whim and Fancy, you proceed thus:

In the Works of Nature, Worth and Excellency is as uncertain. How whimsical is the Florist! Sometimes the Tulip, sometimes the Auricula, shall engross his Esteem. What Mortal can decide which is the handsomest Abstract from the Mode in being, to wear great Buttons, or small ones?*

In Morals, say you, there is no greater Certainty†.

So that according to your Philosophy, he who prefers Equity to Injustice, is but like him that chuses a *great Button* rather than a *small one*; and he who prefers Fidelity to Falseness, as whimsical as the *Florist*, who admires the *Auricula* more than the *Tulip*.

Now if there be only this Difference between *Actions*, then there can be no greater Difference between *Agents*; the best of Men can only excel the vilest of their Race, as a *Tulip* may excel an *Auricula*.

Nay, if Truth and Falshood be no otherwise different from one another, than as one Button differs from another, then it must follow, that there can be no greater Difference between the Author of the one, and the Author of the other.

Now,

* p. cccclxxvii.

† p. cccclxxix.

Now, the Religion of our Country tells us, that God is *Truth*, and the Devil the Author of *Lies*.

This, Sir, you see is the direct, immediate Blasphemy of your Notions, and not drawn from them by any distant or remote Consequences.

And if I should ask you why one should be worshipp'd rather than the other, I should puzzle your profound Philosophy, as much as if I ask'd you which was the finest Flower; for you cannot tell me that one of these Beings is really good, and the other really evil, and yet maintain, that there is no real Goodness in Truth, nor any real Evil in Lies and Falshood.

It is utterly impossible to answer this Question, without giving up your *Uncertainty in Morals*, and allowing that there is something certain and immutable in the Worth and Excellency of Things and Actions.

Should any one charge you with the grossest Villanies, and most flagrant Immoralities that ever were committed by Man, you could have no more Pretence to be angry at the Imputation, than if he had said, you was particularly fond of little Buttons.

To proceed: *Which is the best Religion.* say you, *is a Question that has caused more Mischief than all other Questions together**,

H 2

Religion

* p. ccclxxix.

Religion never comes in your way, but it puts you in a Passion; tho' I dare say, you never had any harm by it in your Life. This is a heavy Charge upon Religion, and upon the best Religion, for that is it which is enquired after. You charge a great deal of Mischief to this Enquiry after the best Religion, on purpose to enhance, I suppose, your own Merit, that you may appear to do a more publick Good, who endeavour to destroy the very Idea of it.

But as mischievous as you reckon this Enquiry to be, I am of another Opinion, taken from him who made the Enquiry necessary, who is God himself.

Thou shalt have no other God besides me, was setting up the best Religion; and *thou shalt not make to thy self any graven Image,* &c. was a Determination against *Paganism*. Now I look upon the best Religion to be a Matter of great Moment, because God has commanded it; and take the Enquiry after it to be well authoriz'd, because God has forbid all false Worship.

If you like it the worse for having this Authority, and should be better pleas'd with Religion, if it was some Politician's Invention, I shall only say, that you are fonder of Cheats than I am.

Again; I don't allow my self to be angry at the Enquiry after the best Religion, because I find that our blessed Saviour came
into

into the World to teach Men the best Religion, and with the highest Rewards and Punishments to perswade Men to seek after and embrace it. *This is Life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* And again, *Go ye and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the End of the World.*

This convinces me, that the Enquiry after the best Religion, is the noblest, the most happy and beneficial of all others, because it is an Enquiry after eternal Happiness: But since you take it to have done more Mischief than all other Enquiries, you know now where to charge it, you know who it was that sent Twelve Apostles, endu'd with resistless Power, to perswade all the Nations of the World to enquire after, and receive the one best Religion. *Ask it, say you, (i. e. which is the best Religion) at Peking, at Constantinople, at Rome, and you'll receive three distinct Answers, extremely different from one another, yet all of them equally positive and peremptory. Christians are well assured of the Falsity of the Pagan and Mahometan Superstitions; but enquire of the several Sects they are divided into, which is the true Church of Christ? And all of them will tell you it is theirs*.*

Then

* p. ccclxxix.

Then comes your Golden Conclusion, *It is manifest, then, that the hunting after this Pulcrum and Honestum, is not much better than a Wild-Goose Chase &c.*

Here I observe, that very consistently indeed with your self, having rejected all moral Virtue, and natural Religion, you treat Revelation in the same manner. Christianity and Pagnism are put upon the same foot, and the Enquiry, which is the best, esteem'd no better than a *Wild-Goose-Chase*, &c. Is this Declaration of yours the Effect of a serious Enquiry into the Merits of different Religions? That cannot be, it reflects too much upon so fine an Understanding as yours, to suppose, that you could ever have been seriously *chasing of wild Geese*.

The Acuteness of your Parts, must have always prevented the Enquiry. You knew, I suppose *ab origine*, from your Cradle, that there was no God, or you could not have been always so clear about the Insignificancy of any Religion? for if there be a God; it is more than probable that he is to be worship'd, and it is hardly to be suppos'd that all Ways of Worship are equally acceptable to him.

You represent the Enquiry after the best Religion, as a mere *Wild-Goose-Chase*, because, if the Question is put at *Peking, Constantinople*, or amongst the various Sects of
Chri-

Christians, all of them claim the only true Worship.

Now, Sir, I'll remove the Question from the Disciples and Followers, to the *Authors* of these Religions. You shall put the Question thus, Ask *Jesus*, ask *Mahomet*, ask some *Pagan* Impostor, and you'll receive three distinct Answers, extremely different from one another, and yet equally positive and peremptory.

Will you stand to your Conclusion here, and therefore it is Madness to concern ourselves more about the one than the other?

Is there any Creature so absurd, as to think this an Argument against *Christ*, or that the Enquiry after him is Folly, because there was one *Mahomet* call'd for Disciples?

Yet the Argument is full as just and cogent against Christ himself, as against the Religion which he has instituted; for if the Religion of *Christ* and that of *Mahomet* have nothing to distinguish them, and Christianity is to be ridicul'd and despis'd, because there is such a Religion as *Mahometism*, then it does undeniably follow, that Christ, when on Earth, might be justly rejected, because there have been other Persons who have pretended to come from God.

This Argument of yours, (if it proves any thing) proves it impossible that there ever should be any Revelation or Religion from God, which Mankind would be obliged

to receive, so long as there was either wicked Spirits or wicked Men in the World. For evil Spirits and evil Men will have evil Designs, and will oppose the Wisdom and Providence of God, in setting up Ways of Religion suitable to their own Tempers and Designs. But according to your Argument, no Religion has any Pretence to our Regard, when once it is oppos'd; nor need we trouble our Heads about the Truth of any, because there is more than one that lays Claim to it, which is as good Sense, as if you was to affirm, that a *Lie* was a Demonstration, that there was no such thing as *Truth*.

Whereas the very Possibility of a false Religion implies the Possibility of a true one, as much as Falshood implies the Possibility of Truth, or Wrong supposes Right.

The wisest Speech therefore that you can make to your sagacious Followers, is this :

“ Gentlemen, I would not have you to
 “ eat or drink, because *Physicians* differ
 “ very much about Diet, and Poisons are
 “ generally convey'd that way ; nor would
 “ I have you take any Money, because there
 “ is counterfeit Coin in the World.

“ There are a great many false Accounts
 “ of Things, therefore you need not, nay,
 “ ought not to trouble your selves about
 “ any that are true.

“ You

“ You may laugh at *David*, when he
 “ says, *the Heavens declare the Glory of*
 “ *God, and the Firmament sheweth his*
 “ *handy-work*, because there is a contrary
 “ Opinion, *a Fool that hath said in his*
 “ *Heart there is no God.*

“ You need not regard Christianity, or
 “ its divine Institution, because there are
 “ other Religions at *Peking* and *Constanti-*
 “ *nople*; nor need you worship the true God,
 “ because in *Egypt* they worshipped *Leeks*
 “ and *Onions*: Nay, you need not hold
 “ that there is any true God, because there
 “ are People who have invented false Deities.

“ When any History is urg'd upon you,
 “ you may answer, that of *Robinson Crusoe*,
 “ is call'd a *true* Account; or any one pre-
 “ tends to be *positive* on the side of Vir-
 “ tue, you may confute his Arrogance, by
 “ saying, it can never be proved that the
 “ *Auricula* exceeds the *Tulip*.

“ These are strong and short Maxims,
 “ which will support you against the Wis-
 “ dom of all Ages; they confute whole
 “ Volumes of *Prophets* and *Apostles* with
 “ a Word speaking.

“ These are Doctrines that require no
 “ Study or Application, and you may be-
 “ lieve them to be proper, by their Fitness
 “ for use. You may drink, debauch, eat,
 “ and sleep as you please, without hinder-
 “ ing your Progress in these Doctrines,

“ Luxury and Wantonness will improve
 “ your Readiness, and your very Dulness
 “ will make you more acute.

“ Nay, the more you sink into Sensuality
 “ and the animal Life, the more you will
 “ feel and relish the Truth of these Senti-
 “ ments. Though you are to fly from all
 “ Appearance of Truth, and avoid all Con-
 “ cern about any Religion, as you would
 “ avoid the Folly of *chasing of wild Geese* ;
 “ yet you must remember, that you are
 “ my Scholars : For I am an *Abstract-*
 “ *Thinker*, and in these my abstract Specu-
 “ lations, you must be my diligent and du-
 “ riful Scholars. Though Christianity may
 “ be dispis’d, because other Religions are
 “ set up against it, yet you must value me
 “ the more for being contrary to the wisest
 “ Men of all Ages in the World.

“ Though there is nothing certain or
 “ valuable in religious Truths, though moral
 “ Virtue is the *Offspring* of Pride, the *In-*
 “ *vention* of Philosophers, and all mere
 “ Whim and Fancy ; yet my Speculations
 “ having the utmost Contrariety to all that
 “ is virtuous, moral, or religious, you may
 “ safely put your whole Trust and Confi-
 “ dence in them.

This is the best Speech that you can pos-
 sibly make to your deluded Followers ; and
 I dare say, if your Principles would allow
 of

of greater Stupidity or Dullness, you would not be without a Party, who, to avoid Salvation, would joyn with an Enemy to Virtue, merely for the Sake of his Cause.

The Infidelity of the present Age is very great, and shews such a Contempt of sacred Things, as was hardly ever heard of before.

If one enquires into the Grounds of it, it seems founded on such an implicit Faith repos'd in Men of wanton and sensual Minds, as is look'd upon to be mean and slavish, when yielded to the highest Evidence in Matters of the last Moment.

To believe *Moses* and the *Prophets*, is ridicul'd, because it is *believing*; but to be a Slave to a wanton Infidel, and blindly swear into his Opinions, is glorious and manly, because it is *Free-thinking*.

Deists and *Free-thinkers* are generally consider'd as *Unbelievers*; but upon Examination, they will appear to be Men of the most resign'd and implicit Faith in the World; they would believe *Transubstantiation*; but that it implies a believing in God; for they never resign their Reason, but when it is to yield to something that opposes Salvation.

For the *Deists* Creed has as many Articles as the *Christians*, and requires a much greater Suspension of our Reason to believe them. So that if to believe Things upon

no Authority, or without any Reason, be an Argument of Credulity, the *Free-thinker* will appear to be the most easy, credulous Creature alive. In the first place, he is to believe almost all the same Articles to be false, which the Christian believes to be true.

Now, it may easily be shewn, that it requires stronger Acts of Faith to believe these Articles to be false, than to believe them to be true.

For, taking Faith to be an Assent of the Mind to some Proposition, of which we have no certain Knowledge, it will appear that the Deist's Faith is much stronger, and has more of Credulity in it than the Christian's. For instance, the Christian believes the *Resurrection* of the Dead, because he finds it supported by such Evidence and Authority, as cannot possibly be higher, supposing the Thing was true; and he does no more Violence to his Reason in believing it, than in supposing that God may intend to do some Things, which the Reason of Man can't conceive how they will be effected.

On the contrary, the *Deist* believes there will be no Resurrection. And how great is his Faith! for he pretends to no Evidence or Authority to support it, it is a pure, naked Assent of his Mind to what he does
not

not know to be true, and of which no Body has or can give him any full Assurance.

So that the Difference between a *Christian* and a *Deist* does not consist in this, that the one assents to Things unknown, and the other does not; but in this, that the Christian assents to Things unknown, on the account of Evidence; the other assents to Things unknown, without any Evidence at all.

Which shews, that the *Christian* is the rational Believer, and the *Deist* the blind Bigot.

Ask a *Deist* or a *Free-thinker* why he believes Christianity to be an Imposture, you must not expect to have any Arguments offer'd you; but however, all Arguments aside, he can tell you, that the Enquiry after the best Religion has done *more Mischiefe*, than all other Enquires together; that it is, at best, but a *Wild-Goose Chase*; he will tell you how *Jesus* has been call'd the *Galilean* by way of Contempt; that there are various Readings in the Scriptures; that Mr. *Whiston* is the most learned and sincere Divine of the Age; that he has call'd the present Doctrine of the Trinity an *Apostasy*; and says, that the present Text of the *Old Testament*, is not that which was used in our Saviour's Time: He may, perhap, crack a Jest upon some Text of the New Testament, and tell you how such a one used to say,

say, that *working a Miracle, was like shewing a Trick.*

If you have Strength enough to maintain your Ground against such Attacks as these, the *Deists* can get no Power over you: But it must be confess'd, that idle and foolish as these Arts appear in Point of Reason, yet they are very fatal in their Effects upon the Minds of Men.

Religion requires a serious and wise Use of our Reason, and can only recommend it self to us, when we are in a Disposition to reason and think soberly; it preserves its Power over our Minds no longer, than whilst we consider it as the most serious, important, and sacred Thing in the World.

Hence it appears, why we are generally to so little affected with Religion, because we are seldom in a State of sober thinking. The Concerns of the World keep our Spirits in a constant Hurry, and prevent our judging rightly of those things, which are not to be judg'd of, but by cool Reason.

Every one knows, that Sicknes, Adversity, and the approach of Death, are advantageous Seasons for the Truths of Religion to affect us; whereas they carry no other Advantage, than as they bring a Man into such a State, as disposes him to think seriously. For this Reason, they who only *laugh* at Religion, may be said to have us'd the strongest Argument against it, for there is

is no coming at it any other way; it is only to be attack'd by little Jest, lewd flings of Wit, such as may betray the Mind into Levity, and corrupt the Imagination; which so far as it is effected, so far is the power of Religion lessen'd.

It is not the Deists business to reason soberly, and consider the Weight and Moment of things with exactness; for to reason soberly, is to act against himself, and put his Reader into that State of Mind in which Religion has its chief Force.

But idle Stories about Gods and Goddesses, and Pagan Mysteries, sawcy Jest, lewd Innuendo's, and nick-names given to serious Things, serve the Cause of Infidelity, much better, than any Arguments, it has yet found out.

For these serve not only to confound and distract the Mind, and lessen the difference of things, but they also gratify and engage the most immoral and wicked Men, as they furnish them with a Confutation of Religion at so cheap a Rate,

How many fine Gentlemen must have been forc'd to have own'd themselves Christians, had not such short Confutations of Christianity been provided to their Hands! But as the Cause is now manag'd, no one can be too dull, senseless or debauch'd, to be a powerful Deist; a poor inflam'd Wretch, who never had the use of his Reason in his
Life,

Life, may easily call Religion a *Dulcinea del tobofa*, and all who would procure any regard to it, *Saint errants*, and when he has done this, he may reckon himself a *great Genius*, and to have shewn as much Learning in favour of Deism, as the first Rate Infidel of the Age.

How many lively *Beaux* had buried their Parts in swearing and Obscenity, had not all Jest upon Scripture been allow'd, as true Proofs of *Deism* and Politeness!

And tho' the *Fraternity* now boasts of its Numbers (as every Vice if it could speak might do the same) yet, if no one was to be allow'd to be a *Deist*, till he had examin'd the Truths and Authory of Religion, as he would examine the *Title* to an Estate, even the present Age, would be able to shew more *Squarers* of the Circle, or *Discoverers* of the Longitude, than *Professors* of Deism.

Nay, was one to ask the most philosophical amongst them, to shew the *great Danger* of being a good Christian, or the fatal Consequences of living in expectation of the *Resurrection*, and *Judgment* to come; was he ask'd to shew the certain safety of *Infidelity*, or why an Infidel can be no Sufferer for rejecting the offers of the Gospel, he could give you as plain an Answer, as if you had ask'd what State this *Globe* of Earth will be in, five thousand Years hence.

But

But indeed it seems needless to observe that Prudence or common Sense, have no Hand in Infidelity. Self-murder does not more directly prove Lunacy, than Infidelity proves the loss of Reason.

There is no one that seems more to depend upon the Folly and Madness of his Readers, than you do.

You tell them that you are a *mere Animal* govern'd by Appetites over which you have no Power; that is, you describe yourself as a *Machine* that would look well in a *Bridle*, and then pretend to talk of God, and Providence, and Religion, and Morality, and to pierce into the inmost nature of Things and Actions, with as much Ease, as if you was some superior Form, that was made up of pure Wisdom and Intelligence.

But the thing is, you knew what side you had chosen, and that if you was not wanting in Impiety, Lewdness, and Reproaches upon Virtue, you might abound in Nonsense as much as you pleas'd.

And indeed it must be confess'd, that as hardly any Authority is sufficient to recommend a Person, that comes from God, to do us good, so is there scarce any Folly great enough to expose another, that comes a Missioner from the Kingdom of Darkness to do us Harm.



S E C T. IV.

YOU are at last so sensible of the Abilities, which you have discover'd, in laying open the Mysteries of human Nature, that you think it but a necessary piece of Civility, to make an Apology to the World, for shewing such a superior Knowledge. Thus say you,

What Hurt do I do to Man, if I make him more known to himself than he was before?

But we are so desperately in Love with Flattery, that we can never relish a Truth that is mortifying.

To prove the Justice of this Remark, you say, *I don't believe the Immortality of the Soul would even have found so general a Reception in human Capacities as it has, had it not been a pleasing one, that extoll'd and was a Compliment to the whole Species*.*

This Remark supposes that the *Mortality* of the Soul is a *Truth*, for you make our not believing it to be Mortal, a Proof that we can't relish a Truth that is mortifying. You also impute our Opinion of the Souls Immortality, to a *desperate love*
of

of Flattery, which is giving it as sure a Mark of an Error, as you could well have thought of.

The reasonableness of this Remark, is founded upon that Advantage and Dignity, which arises from Immortality; this is it which induces you to think that its Reception in human Capacities is owing to a love of Flattery.

You might have made the same Remark upon the *Belief* of the *Being* and Providence of God, that they had never had so general a Reception in human Capacities, were not Men desperately *in love with Flattery*, and not able to relish a Truth that is mortifying.

For the *Being* and *Providence* of God, are the most pleasing *Truths*, and more extol and elevate Mans Nature and Condition than any thing else, and whilst we assert the Providence of God, we assert our own Happiness, as being the Care and Concern of so great and glorious a Nature.

But how ought that Man to be treated, who should bring the *Belief* of a Divine Being as an Instance of the Power of Flattery over human Nature, or alledge the Doctrine of Providence as a Proof, that we can't relish a Truth that is mortifying.

Yet this would be as well, as to instance as you have done in the Immortality of the Soul. For it is as reasonable to rejoice

in the Immortality of our Souls, as in the Being of God; and it is as impious to say, that we hold its Immortality, because we cannot relish a Truth that is mortifying; as to say that we believe the Providence of God for the same Reason.

What an Aversion must you have to the Force of this Principle, that when you was to shew, that we can't relish a *Truth* that is mortifying, you could like no Instance so well, as the general disbelief of the Souls Mortality? Can it be suppos'd that you would have instanc'd in this Opinion, if you had not wish'd, that it should lose its Force upon Mens Minds, be no longer consider'd as the corner Stone of Religion, but as a *Notion* founded in the Falseness, Pride and Flattery of Man's Nature?

Was any one ever so angry at the *Macedonian* Hero's Vanity of being a God; need he have reproach'd him more, than by imputing it to a *desperate love of Flattery*.

Yet this is the tender Method, in which you have chose to expose the Belief of the Souls Immortality, as owing to a desperate love of Flattery.

You will perhaps say, *Have I deny'd the Souls Immortality?*

In express Terms you have not deny'd it; such a flat denial would have signify'd much less, than what you have said.

You

You knew very well, that to impute the Belief of it to Falseness and Flattery, was the best way of denying it.

It is rejected here in a manner that highly suits the Temper of Irreligion, by being consider'd not only as false, but as arising from the basest Qualities of Human Nature, *Pride* and a *desperate* Love of *Flattery*.

These Things serve not only to raise a Disbelief, but to excite an Indignation against a Principle owing to such reproachful Causes; and what is still a greater Point gain'd, they teach People to look with Contempt and Dislike on those Persons, and that Religion which teaches such a Principle.

Our blessed Saviour saith, *I am the Resurrection and the Life, he that believeth in me shall never die.*

Now, according to your Philosophy, this Speech of our Saviour's, must be reckon'd an artful Application to the Weakness and Vanity of Human Nature, an Address to the blind Side of Man, to increase his Love of Flattery, and keep him from a true Knowledge of himself.

For if Man believes the Immortality of his Soul, through a desperate Love of Flattery, certainly he who comes to encourage and establish such a Belief, comes to encourage and establish that immoderate Love of Flattery.

Nay,

Nay, this Doctrine of yours, not only serves to expose the Opinion of the Immortality of the Soul, and reproaches the Christian Religion which teaches it; but it prepares a Man to be Proof against all Doctrines of Religion that have any Happiness in them; for whatever is believ'd or practis'd that tends any way to raise or exalt the Condition of Man, is equally subject to this Reproach, that it is *receiv'd* through an excessive Fondness of Flattery.

So that your wise Philosophy comes to this, that if there was no Honour or Happiness in Religion, was there no Greatness to be acquir'd by our obeying God, it could not be charg'd upon our Pride and Vanity; but since Religion is in order to Happiness, and since our worshipping of God, implies our having a great and glorious Friend and Benefactor, such a Religion may be owing to a Vice of our Nature, a *desperate Love of Flattery*.

And the same may be said of every virtuous Action, that it is practis'd through a desperate Love of Flattery, in as much as Virtue is suppos'd to make us Friends and Favourites of God, and so dignifies and exalts our State.

Nay, this way of arguing proves, that the greater and more glorious the Idea is, which we form of God, the more we may be influenc'd by an ill Motive; for the greater

greater and more glorious we represent the Nature of God, the more we raise and dignify our selves, who are related to so great a Being, and are in Covenant with him.

So that to clear our selves of a desperate Love of Flattery, and to shew that we can relish Truths that are mortifying, we should conceive very low and mean Notions of God, and such as made it neither our Honour nor Happiness to worship him,

Such a Religion as this, that had nothing in it worthy of God or Men, might, according to your Account, be owing to some rational Principle, and not imputable to the Pride or Vanity of Mans Nature.

For since you impute the Belief of the Soul's Immortality, to a desperate Love of Flattery, because such Belief set us out to great Advantage, and adds Dignity to our Nature.

The same Imputation is equally chargeable upon every Doctrine, or Practice, that promises any Happiness or Honour to us; and no Religion or Opinions can be free from that Charge, but such as are of no Benefit or Advantage to us.

From this therefore we may believe, that had we a Religion which proposed nothing worthy of God, or beneficial to Man, the *Deists* and Wits of your Size, would all of them turn *Priests*, and devoutly wait at its *Altars*.

To

To speak now a Word or two concerning *Pride*.

Pride is an Error or a Vice ; as *Covetousness* is a Vice, it is a noble Desire, ill directed : It is a right Desire, earnestly to desire Happiness ; but that Desire is sinful, when it is wholly set upon *Gold*, or any other *false* Good.

So a Desire of Greatness is an excellent Desire, a right Turn of Mind ; but when it fixes upon a false Honour, it is a vitious Irregularity. To desire the highest Exaltation of which our Nature is capable, is as right a Disposition, as to desire to be as like to God as we can.

Now, had you said that the Belief of the Soul's Immortality, was assisted and strengthened in us, through a Desire of Greatness, you had said as reasonable a Thing, as to say, that Christianity makes a stronger Impression upon the Minds of Men, through a Desire of Happiness.

For had we not these Dispositions, neither Religion, nor any thing else that was of any Advantage to us, could take any hold of us : For, what would the Happiness or Greatness of any Proposal signify to Beings, whose Natures were not affected with them ?

Now, to say that Religion is better received through this Tendency of our Nature, is no more a Reproach, than it is to say

say that our Understanding and Reason recommend Religion to us.

For these Dispositions or Inclinations constitute the Excellence of our Nature, and give us all the Dignity that we have.

It being as right a Judgment of the Mind, to desire to be as like to God as our Natures will allow, as it is to prefer Truth to Falshood.

But to impute our Belief of the Immortality of the Soul to *Pride*, is as ridiculous, as to impute our Desire of eternal Happiness to *Avarice*.

For *Pride*, consider'd as a Vice, is no more the Cause of our Approbation of Immortality, than *Avarice* is the Cause of our setting our Affection on Things above.

Pride is as earthly and down-looking a Vice as Covetousness, and as truly sinks the Soul into a State of Meanness.

A Delight in false Honour as much debases and hinders the Mind from aspiring after its true Greatness, as a Fondness for empty Riches keeps the Soul averse from the Approbation of her true Good. That this is the Effect of Pride, that it debases the Mind, and makes it unable to relish its true Greatness, that it unfits it for the Reception of Doctrines which exalt and raise our Nature, may be also learnt from Him, who came to lead us unto all Truth.

L

Speak-

Speaking of vain-glorious Men, says our blessed Saviour, *how can ye believe, which receive Honour one of another, and seek not that Honour, which cometh from God alone**.

But you make the Pride of Man, the Cause of his believing divine 'Truths; tho' they are as opposite to one another, as Avarice and Heavenly-mindedness, Light and Darkness.

To make some Apology for your self, you say, *What Hurt do I do to a Man, if I make him more known to himself than he was before?*

You should have put the Question thus: What Hurt do I do to a Man, if I make him more vicious than he was before, if I deprave his Understanding, and lead him into a Contempt and Dislike of the strongest Principles of Religion?

For if there is any Danger either to your self or others, in corrupting their Minds, and destroying the Motives to Religion and Virtue, you are capable of no other Apology, but what that Being may make, *who goeth about as a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour.*

The *Arrow that flieth by Day*, and the *Pestilence that walketh in Darkness*, are mere Blessings, if compar'd to the Man who
infuses

* St. John v. 44.

infuses vicious Opinions into the Mind, which weakens the Power of Religion, and makes Men less devoted to the Worship and Service of God,

How can you say, that you have only made Man more known to himself, by teaching him that the general Belief of the Soul's Immortality is owing to a desperate Love of Flattery ?

Have you proved, that he does not know himself if he thinks it is owing to any other Cause ? Have you so much as attempted to shew, that it can have no other Foundation ? That it is not founded in Reason, Religion, and the Attributes of God.

But proving (I recollect) is no Talent of yours ; and if you may be allowed to *shine* in any thing, it is in loose Insinuations, positive Assertions, and vain Conjectures.



SECT. V.

YOU come now to give us a Taste of your Skill in *Phraseology*, or the Force and Propriety of Words. All sorts of Learning seem to be at your Service, and you are so constant to your self, as to make them all conspire in one and the same Design against Religion,

Hope, being a Word of great Consolation in the Christian Religion, you have pitch'd upon that, as most deserving the kind Assistance of your learned Hand.

All Hope, say you, *includes Doubt*; a silver Inkhorn may pass in Speech, because every Body knows what we mean by it, but a certain Hope cannot. The Epithet destroys the Essence of the Substantive; it is palpable Nonsense. The Reason therefore why it is not so shocking to some, to hear a Man speak of certain Hope, as if he should talk of hot Ice, or liquid Oak, is not because there is less Nonsense contain'd in the first, than in either of the latter, but because the Word Hope, I mean the Essence of it, is not so clearly understood by the Generality of the People, as the Words and Essences of Ice and Oak are*.

What a Triumph is here over Religion! And with how much Ease do you reject an Article of Faith with a *Noun Substantive*!

In our *Burial Service* we have these Words, *In sure and certain Hope of a Resurrection, &c.*

This it seems cannot pass in Speech, without the Destruction of a *Substantive*; it is shocking, and palpable Nonsense.

Let

* p. cxlix.

Let it first be observ'd, that *Hope* implies the *Belief*, *Expectation*, or *Dependence* of something that shall come to pass. Now I should think that a Thing may as well be expected with Certainty, as Uncertainty; and that its being certain to happen, is no Inconsistency in the Expression, It can hardly be denied, but that a Man may be certain that some Things will never happen; and where is the Contradiction of supposing him as certain that some Things will happen?

But to come to your own Arguments.

All Hope, say you, *includes Doubt*. This as much contradicts my Understanding, as if you had said, that *all Trust* includes *Diffidence*; and that I can't trust a Man, unless I distrust him. The Apostle says, *by Hope we are sav'd*; according to you, he must mean, by *Doubting* we are sav'd; for if *Hope* necessarily includes *Doubting*, and *Hope* be necessary to Salvation, it evidently follows, that *Doubting* is necessary to Salvation; and every Exhortation to *hope* in God, is an Exhortation to *doubt* of God.

Our blessed Saviour said, *if ye have Faith, and doubt not*, &c. Now had you been present at this Saying, you could have shewn the Impossibility of what he exhorted them to; that *Faith* or *Hope* implied *Doubting*; and that to talk of *certain Hope* or *Faith*, was as shocking to a fine Understanding, as to talk of *hot Ice*, or *liquid Oak*.

Certain

Certain Hope, you say, is *palpable Nonsense*, because the *Epithet* destroys the Essence of the *Substantive*.

So that *Doubting* is the Essence of *Hope*, and consequently whatever else belongs to *Hope*, is only *accidental*; the Essence of *Hope* is *Doubting*.

Now if *Doubting* is the Essence of *Hope*, then where there is the most *Doubting* there must be the most of *Hope*, for where there is most of the Essence of a thing, there must necessarily be most of the thing it self.

Now it seems to me as ridiculous, to make *Doubting* the Essence of *Hope*, as to make *Fear*, the Essence of *Courage*. For *Hope* so far as it goes, as much excludes *Doubting*, as *Courage* so far as it extends, banishes *Fear*. There may be a weak *Hope* which is mix'd with *Doubt*, as there may be a half *Courage* that is attended with *Fear*, but a thorough *Hope* as truly rejects *Doubt*, as a perfect *Courage* shakes off all *Fear*. And it is just such *shocking Nonsense* to talk of a *certain Hope*, as to speak of a *fearless Courage*: And there is just so much Murder of the *Substantive* in one Case, as the other.

Hope or *Expectation* does not imply *Uncertainty*, but *Futurity*, that the things expected, are not in being, but are to come to pass; this is all that is of the Essence of
Hope;

Hope; it is only the *Futurity* of things that makes it.

Let the things come to pass, and the Hope ceases, this is the only way of destroying it. But whether the things to come be with Certainty or Uncertainty expected, no more destroys that Disposition of Mind, which is call'd Hope, than the Passion of *Fear* is destroy'd, by exerting it self reasonably or unreasonably.

Hope is uncertain, not because we cannot hope or expect with Certainty, but because the things we hope for, are generally not in our Power, so as we can be secure of the Event.

But you ridiculously suppose, that Hope, or Expectation, as a Faculty of the Mind necessarily includes Incertainty, as if a Man cannot expect or hope for that, which he is sure will answer his Expectation; or that he must cease to expect things, because he has certain grounds to expect them. These are the Absurdities which you plunge into, rather than allow a *certain Hope* of the *Resurrection* of the Dead.

Hope is as the things hop'd for; in uncertain things it is uncertain. But if God is pleas'd to inform us of things to come, we are with *certain Hope* and Expectation to depend upon them.

Agreable

Agreeable to this, St. *Paul* says, *In hope of eternal Life, which God, that cannot lye, promised before the World began.*

Here we have an Apostle's Authority for a *certain Hope*, made as undeniable as the Veracity of God.

But this must be very shocking to a Gentleman of your refin'd Understanding; and must give you a farther uneasiness to behold the Destruction of a whole Noun *Substantive*, to establish only an Article of Religion.

You compare *certain Hope*, to *hot Ice*, or *liquid Oak*, and say that the Expressions would be equally *shocking*, were the Nature of *Hope* as well understood, as the Nature of *Ice* and *Oak*.

Had you not been us'd to understand every thing wrong, you had never made this Observation; for the contrary to this, happens to be true, that the Expression is not so shocking in one Case as the other, because the Nature of Hope is as well understood, as that of *Ice*, &c.

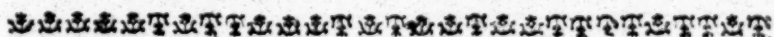
It is not shocking to say *certain Hope*, because, Hope is known to be founded upon some degrees of Assurance.

But does *Ice* suppose some degrees of Heat in order to its Existence? Is *Ice* hotter or Colder, as Hope is more or less assur'd? Hope is stronger and better, the *more* it has of Assurance, and the *less* it is oppos'd

pos'd with Doubts; but is *Ice* the stronger and harder, the *more* it has of Heat; or the *less* it is surrounded with Cold?

Your Comparison also of *certain Hope*, to *liquid Oak*, is equally ingenious and worthy of your self; for it supposes that an *Oak* changes from *solid* to *liquid*, as *Hope* fluctuates from *Doubts* to *Belief*. For were not an *Oak* as various in its Nature, as to *liquid* and *solid*, as *Hope* is various in its Nature, as to *Doubt* and *Assurance*, it must be *shocking* Nonsense, to make a *liquid Oak* the same thing as an *assur'd Hope*.

I have been the longer upon this Point, because it is levell'd at the very Foundation of our Religion, and would teach People to doubt of its greatest Articles, through the mere force of a Word or two, and for the sake of a Noun *Substantive*.



S E C T. VI.

I HAD now taken my Leave of you, if the Letter you publish'd in the *London Journal*, in defence of your Book, had not been just put into my Hands.

Having seen your Talent at Apology, I expected no great Matter from you in that Way; but however I am now convinc'd,

M

that

that your Book gives us but a small Essay of your Abilities, and that you can exceed it as much as you please.

For who would imagine that the Author of so poor a Rhapsody, could produce such masterly Strokes as these in the Defence of it.

My Vanity, say you, I never could conquer, so well as I could wish, and I am too proud to commit Crimes.

Surely no one after this will venture to lay any thing to your Charge, since great must be your innocence, if Pride be the Guardian of it.

But if any one should chance to humble you, you must then fall into a defenseless State. But if you are not to be prov'd guilty, till you can be shewn to be deficient in Pride, it may require some time to effect it.

Since you ground your Vindication so much upon your Pride, it may not be amiss to recollect the Definition you have given us of it in your own Book. *Pride, say you, is that natural Faculty, by which every Mortal, that has any Understanding, overvalues and imagines better things of himself, than any impartial Judge thoroughly acquainted with all his Qualities and Circumstances would allow him*.*

A pretty

* p. cxxv.

A pretty Qualification indeed, for a Man to found his Innocence upon! Yet, you (with a more than ordinary Brightness) own that you are govern'd by this *Vice*, to prove your self to be *Faultless*,

Should a *blind* Man who had lost his Way, alledge his *Blindness*, as a Proof that he could not lose it, he would shew that he was just as well acquainted with the Advantages of Blindness, as you are with the Effects of Pride.

The next ingenious Step that you take is this: *The Fable of the Bees*, say you, *was design'd for the Entertainment of People of Knowledge and Education*, — it is a *Book of severe and exalted Morality, that contains a strict Test of Virtue*.

Had you said that the Author was a *Seraphim*, and that he never was any nearer the Earth than the fix'd Stars, I should have thought you in as sober a Way as you now appear to be in.

That you intended it for the Entertainment of *People of Knowledge and Education*, is what I can't say is false, for, if your Pride is such as you assert, you may be capable of intending any thing; I know of nothing too monstrous for you to go about.

But if you can believe, that you have writ a Book of *severe and exalted Morality*, you must not laugh at those who believe *Stocks*, and *Stones* to be Objects of Wor-

ship, or took a *Leek* or an *Onion* to be a *Deity*.

You are happy in this, that you have made an Assertion which an Adversary cannot farther expose, because there is no superior Degree of Extravagance to which it can be compar'd.

For if a Person will write a Book to prove that Man is a *mere Animal* and that *moral Virtue* is the political Offspring which Flattery begot upon Pride, and then call it a Book of *severe* and *exalted Morality*, he has this Satisfaction, that no Skill can aggravate his Nonsense.

Such as it is, you say, you are satisfy'd it has diverted Persons of great Probity and Virtue.

Pray, Sir, how does this appear? Where do you find these People of *great Virtue*? When you writ your Book, you knew of no such People. Virtue was then no where to be found: For you tell us, that having in vain sought for it in the World, you at last went to the *Convents*, but even there it had no Existence. But now, it seems, rather than want an Apology, you'll suppose even what confutes your Book, and what you most hate, that there is such a Being as a Man of *great Virtue*.

I lay it down, you add, as a first Principle, that in all Societies, great or small, it is the Duty of every Member of it to be good;

good; that Virtue ought to be encourag'd, Vice discountenanc'd, the Laws obey'd, and the Transgressors punish'd; and then, you say, there is not a Line in the whole Book that contradicts this Doctrine.

This comes so oddly from you, that it need not be expos'd to the Reader; if you had intended it as a *publick Recantation* of all that you had deliver'd before, there had been something in it; but to say, that *there is not a Line in your Book that contradicts this*, is trusting too much to the Weakness of your Readers: For, can you pretend to have a *first Principle*, or to talk of *Duty* or *Virtue*, after you have declar'd, that the *moral Virtues* are all a Cheat, by making them the *political Offspring which Flattery begot upon Pride*?

Can you recommend *Goodness*, who have compar'd the *Pulchrum* and *Honestum* in Actions, to the whimsical Distinctions of *Flowers*, and made the Difference between Good and Evil as fanciful, as the Difference between a *Tulip* and an *Auricula*.

When therefore you pretend to *lay it down as a first Principle, that it is the Duty of every Man to be good, &c.*

It amounts to as much as if you had said, having shewn, that there is nothing but Fancy in the Preference of Flowers, *I lay it down as a first Principle, that it is the Duty of every Man to admire the Tulip above*

above all other Flowers ; that the Love of Tulips ought to be encourag'd ; and that of Auricula's discountenanc'd, &c.

But however, lest any of your Readers should imagine that you meant something more than this, and to clear your self from all Suspicion of Gravity or Seriousness, in your Recommendation of *Virtue* and *Goodness*, you immediately add this Explication of your self.

Would you banish Fraud and Luxury, prevent Prophaneness and Irreligion, and make the Generality of the People charitable, good, and virtuous ; break down the Printing-Presses, melt the Founds, and burn all the Books in the Island ; knock down Foreign Trade, prohibit all Commerce with Strangers, and permit no Ships to go to Sea ; restore to the Clergy, the King, and the Barons, their antient Privileges, Prerogatives, and Possessions ; build new Churches, and convert all the Coin you can come at, into sacred Utensils ; erect Monasteries and Alms-houses in Abundance, and let no Parish be without a Charity-School ; let the Clergy preach Abstinence and Self-denial to others, and take what Liberty they please for themselves ; let no Man be made Lord-Treasurer but a Bishop.--- By such pious Endeavours, and wholesome Regulations, the Scene would soon be alter'd.---Such a Change would influence the Manners of the Nation, and render

der them temperate, honest, and sincere, and from the next Generation we might reasonably expect an harmless, innocent, and well meaning People, that would never dispute the Doctrine of Passive-Obedience, nor any other Othodox Principles, but be submissive to Superiors, and unanimous in Religious Worship.*

It must be own'd, that you never so much exceeded yourself as in this Flight of your Oratory. And had your teeming Imagination been able to have produc'd one more Evil or Folly, it had been added to the lovely Idea you have form'd of a People intending to live like Christians.

He that can now suspect you guilty of one sober Thought in relation to Religion or Morality, must be acknowledg'd to be very senseless.

For, mention your Regard to Religion or Virtue as often as you please, you have here taken care to assure us, that you wish their Prosperity as *heartily* as you wish to see the Kingdom full of *Monasteries*, and all our Money *converted* into *sacred Utensils*.

But I beg pardon for supposing, that what you have so clearly said, to shew your Abhorrence of Religion and Contempt of Virtue, needs any illustration.

But

But to carry on the *Banter* you still add,
If I have shewn the Way to worldly Great-
ness, I have always without Hesitation
prefer'd the Road that leads to Virtue.

Had there been one Instance of this kind
 in your Book, I suppose you would have
 referr'd us to it. But enough has been al-
 ready observ'd, to shew what Virtue im-
 plies in your System. I shall however pro-
 duce one Passage to shew, how you *always*
and without Hesitation prefer the Road that
leads to Virtue.

Speaking of *Lust* you say, the *artful Mo-*
ralists have taught us chearfully to subdue
it. And then you cry out, *Oh! the mighty*
Prize we have in view for all our Self-de-
nial! Can any Man be so serious as to ab-
stain from Laughter, when he considers that
for so much Deceit and Insincerity practis'd
upon ourselves as well as others, we have
no other Recompence, then the vain Satis-
faction of making our Species appear more
exalted, and remote from that of other Ani-
mals than it really is, and we in our own
Consciences know it to be.*

Thus it is, that *without Hesitation* you
 give your Approbation of Virtue; you make
 the Moderation of our Passions to be even
 a Sin against our *own Consciences*, as acting
deceit-

deceitfully contrary to what we know becomes us.

You make *Self-denial*, or any Restraints which distinguish us from Brutes, to be so ridiculous a Thing, as ought to excite the Laughter and Contempt of every Creature.

Thus is your prostitute Pen wantonly employed, to put out as far as you can, the Light of Reason and Religion, and deliver up mankind to Sensuality and Vileness.

Should I now lament the miserable Fruits of *Free-thinking*, which thus tend not only to set us loose from the Regards of Religion, but to destroy whatever is reasonable, decent, or comely in human Nature; tho' as a Friend of Religion I might be censur'd by *some*, yet surely as an advocate for the Dignity of Man, I might be pardon'd by *all*.

But it is our peculiar Unhappiness as Clergymen, that if we sit loose to the Duties of Religion, we are doubly reproach'd, and if we firmly assert its Doctrines, we fall under as great Condemnation.

In all other Causes a Man is better receiv'd, because it is his proper Business to appear, yet that which should recommend our Pleadings, happens to make them less regarded: We are worse heard, because God has made it our Duty to speak.

But I wave this Topick; for, if when we assert the common Doctrines of Christianity,

we are thought too much interested, we shall hardly be reckon'd less selfish; when we plead for common Equity towards our selves.

You have therefore pick'd out a right Body of Men to ridicule; and your manner of doing it, shews, you knew, that no want of Wit would make you less successful.

We often suffer from *Porters* and *Carmen*, who venture to be smart upon us, thro' an Assurance, that we must lose by replying. A Security like this has encourag'd you to be very liberal of your Mirth, and such Mirth as might pass for *Dulness* upon any other Subject.

I won't say how infinite your Wit has been upon our Dress and Habit, or what uncommon *Vivacity* you have shewn upon the *Beaver* Hat, whether new or old.

Had you spar'd our *Majestick Gate*, *slick Faces kept constantly shav'd*, *handsome Nails diligently par'd*, and *Linen transparently curious**, nothing of the *Sublime* had been found in your Book. It must be confess'd this is an heavy Charge against the *Priesthood*, but we may see you was loath to enhance it, or you might have mention'd the *black Eyes* the *high Foreheads*, and the *dimp-
led*

* p. cxxxvii.

led Chins, which may be prov'd upon several of them, which they shew in the Face of the World at Noon-Day.

But since I have charg'd you with *Wit*, I don't think it fair to leave you under so gross an Accusation, without something to support your Spirits. Read therefore the following Words of the most excellent *Bruyere*:

Have the Libertines, says he, *who value themselves so much upon the Title of Wits, have they Wit enough to perceive that they are only call'd so by Irony?*

You can hardly relish any thing of mine, after this taste of so fine a Writer, I shall therefore trouble you but little farther.

If you wonder, that I have taken no Notice of the dreadful Evils you charge upon *Charity-Schools*, and the sad Effects which such *catechizing Houses* must have upon a Kingdom that is both *Christian* and *Protestant*; I must tell you that I purposely avoided it. Some Things are so plain, that it is yeilding too much, to offer to defend them.

Christians, I hope, will have so much common Sense as to know, that no Christian can call such Houses an evil; and as to Complaints from other hands, who would not wish that the Enemies of Christianity may have every Day more reason to complain.

As to your Part they will observe, that in these very Writings, where you complain of the Evil of *Charity Schools*, you make *moral Virtue* a Cheat, the *Offspring* of *Pride*, and the Enquiry after the *best Religion*, but a *Wild-Goose Chase*. A very worthy Person indeed to talk of either *Good* or *Evil*!

Whilst we can preserve but the very Name of Religion, a charitable Contribution to educate Children in it, must be reckon'd amongst our best Works.

Charity-Schools can never need a Defense in a Kingdom, that boasts of having the Scriptures in the *vulgar Tongue*. For if it be our Glory and Happiness to have the Bible in *English*, surely it must be in some Degree glorious to teach our *Natives* how to read it.

You say, if any one can shew the *least Tittle* of *Blasphemy* or *Prophaneness*, in your Book, or *any Thing tending to Immorality, or a Corruption of Manners*, you will burn it yourself, at any Time or Place your *Adversary* shall appoint. I appoint the first Time, and the most publick Place, and if you keep your Word, shall be your humble Servant.

P O S T.



POSTSCRIPT.

HAVING in my Second Section mention'd Mr. *Bayle*, as the principal Author amongst those, whose Parts have been employed to arraign and expose Virtue and Religion, as being only the blind Effects of *Complexion*, natural *Temper* and *Custom*, &c. It may not be improper to recommend to his Admirers, the following Instances of that Gentleman's great *Penetration* and *Clearness* on this Subject.

Mr. *Bayle* engag'd in a Cause where he found it necessary to assert, that a *Society of Atheists*, might be as virtuous Men, as a Society of other People professing Religion; and to maintain this Opinion, he was farther oblig'd to declare, that religious *Opinions* and *Beliefs*, had no Influence *at all* upon Mens Actions.

This Step was very necessary to be taken; for if religious *Opinions* or *Beliefs*, were allowed to have *any* Influence upon our Actions, then it must also have been allowed, that a *Society of Atheists* must have been less virtuous, than a Society of People holding religious Opinions.

Mr. *Bayle* therefore roundly deny'd, that religious Opinions have any Influence
upon

upon us ; and set himself to prove, that *Complexion*, natural *Temper*, *Customs*, &c. are the *only* Causes of our Actions.

Thus he says, *he is persuaded that Man is that kind of Creature, who with* all his boasted Reason, never acts by the Principles of his Belief**. Again, *it cannot be deny'd, that Man acts continually, against Principles*. And again, *I pretend to have demonstrated that Men never act by Principle*.

Mr. Bayle has often diverted himself with the Unreasonableness of those *Divines*, who first declare the Sublimity and Inconceivableness of the Christian Mysteries, and then pretend to explain them. But they may laugh at him in their Turn, who happens to be as weak and unreasonable even in his *Philosophical Chair*.

For he can give it you out as an undeniable Maxim, *that the Mind of Man being subject to infinite Caprice and Variety, no Rule can be laid down concerning it, not liable to a thousand Objections***; and then tell you *he has demonstrated, that Man never acts by Principle*: As if he had said, I give you here a *certain and infallible Rule* concerning the Mind of Man, not liable to *one* Objection; tho' I assure you, *that no Rule can be laid down, not liable to a thousand Objections*.

Mr. Bayle

* Miscell. Reflect. p.

** *ibid.* p. cclxxix.

Mr. Bayle, to shew that his *Society* of *Atheists* might be as virtuous as other Men, affirms, that a *wicked Inclination* neither arises from our *Ignorance* of *God's Existence*, nor is check'd by the *Knowledge* of a *supreme Judge* who punishes and rewards. And that an *Inclination to Evil*, belongs no more to a *Heart void of the Sense of God*, than one possessed with it, and that one is under no looser a *Rein* than the other (1).

With how much *Reason* and *Freedom* of *Mind* Mr. Bayle asserts this, may be seen from what he says in other Places. Thus in his *historical Dictionary* he can tell you, that there is nothing so advantageous to *Man*, if we consider either the *Mind* or the *Heart*, as to know *God* rightly (2).

He can commend the Saying of *Silius Italicus*, as very pertinently spoken of the *Carthaginians*, alas, miserable *Mortals*! your *Ignorance of the divine Nature* is the original Cause of your *Crimes*. Again, I wont deny there have been *Pagans*, who making the utmost Use of their *Notion of the divine Nature*, have render'd it the Means of abating the *Violence of their Passions* (3).

These Contradictions need no Illustration; I shall pass on to shew you a few more of the same Kind.

Mr. Bayle

(1) Ibid. p. ccxciv.

(2) Vol. 4. p. 2683.

(3) Miscel. Reflect. p. ccxciv.

Mr. Bayle affirm. *that Man never acts by the Principles of his Belief.* Yet see how often he teaches the contrary. Speaking of the strange Opinions and Practices of some Pagans, *who, tho' persuaded of a Providence, deny'd nothing to their Lusts and Passions:* He gives this as the Reason of their Conduct, *either that they must suppose the Gods approved these Ways, or else that one need not trouble ones self whether they did or no* (1.)

See here this elevated Free-Thinker, asserting that *Man never acts by his Belief;* and yet making it *necessary*, that the Pagans must have had *such or such a Belief*, or else they could never have acted as they did.

Instances of this Kind are very numerous. In the Article of the Sadducees, he says, *the good Life of the Sadducees might have been an Effect of their believing a Providence.* Again, the Orthodox will feel the Activity of that Impression, as well as the Sadducees, and that being moreover persuaded of a future State, Religion will have a greater Influence upon their Lives (2.)

Here a *Belief* of a Providence in this World, is allow'd to be the Cause of a *good Life*, and a *Persuasion* of a future State affirm'd to have a still greater Influence upon
our

(1.) Ibid. p. ccciv. (2.) Hist. Diſt.

our Lives; and yet the same *great Reasoner demonstrates*, that Men always act without any Regard to their *Beliefs* or *Persuasions*.

To demonstrate that *Beliefs* and *Opinions* have no part in the forming our Lives, Mr. *Bayle* appeals to the Lives of Christians; for, *were it otherwise*, says he, *how is it possible that Christians, so clearly instructed from Revelation, supported by so many Miracles, that they must renounce their Sins, in order to be eternally happy, and to prevent eternal Misery, should yet live as they do, in the most enormous Ways of Sin and Disobedience.*

This is Mr. *Bayle's* invincible Demonstration, that *Beliefs* and *Persuasions* have no Effect upon us, and that Man *never* acts by Principle; tho' you shall see that he can as well demonstrate the contrary to this.

In the Article of *Sommona-codom*, speaking of this Doctrine, *viz. That an old Sinner who has enjoy'd all the Pleasures of Life, will be eternally happy, provided he truly repent on his Death Bed*: He makes this Remark, *doubtless, this may be the Reason why the Fear of God's Judgments, or the Hopes of his Rewards, make no great Impressions upon worldly People**.

Here you see this learned Philosopher urges the Lives of Christians, as a *Demon-*
O *stration*

* Hist. Dict.

stration that Men never act by *Persuasion*; and yet tells you, as a Thing *past all doubt*, that they live as they do, through a *Persuasion* that a Death-Bed Repentance will set all at right.

Take another Instance of the same kind.

Religion and Principle have no Effect upon us: *This must be the Case*, says Mr. Bayle, or the *antient Pagans*, who were under the Yoke of numberless Superstitions, continually employ'd in appeasing the Anger of their Idols, aw'd by infinite Prodigies, and firmly persuaded the Gods dispensed Good or Evil, according to the Life they lead, had been restrain'd from all the abominable Crimes they committed*.

This Paragraph is to shew, that religious *Persuasions* have no Effect upon us, because, if they had, the *Persuasions* of the Pagans must have made them good Men.

But Mr. Bayle here forgets, that he himself has affirm'd that the *Pagan Religion* not only taught ridiculous Things, but that it was besides a Religion authorizing the most abominable Crimes†. That they were led to their Crimes by their very Religion; that it must have been a Point of Faith with them; that to make themselves Imitators of God, they ought to be Cheats, Envious, Fornicators, Adulterers.

So

* Miscell. Reflect. p. cclxxv. † Ibid. p. cccxc.

So that this Philosopher shews, with great Consistency, that the *Religion* of the *Pagans* engag'd them in *abominable Crimes*; and that the *Pagans* did not act by their Religion, *because* they were guilty of *abominable Crimes*.

But I proceed no farther at present, this Specimen of Mr. *Bayle's* Absurdities and *Contradictions* on this very Article, where he has been most admir'd, may suffice to shew, that if he has gain'd upon Mens Minds, it has been by other Arts than those of clear Reasoning. I would not by this insinuate, that he was not a Man of fine Parts; *Bellarmin's* Absurdities, tho' ever so many, still leave room to acknowledge his great Abilities. This seems to have been Mr. *Bayle's* Case; he was no *Jesuit* or *Papist*, but he was as great a *Zealot* in his way. *Bellarmin* contradicted himself for the sake of *Mother Church*; and Mr. *Bayle* contradicted himself, as heartily, for the sake of an *imaginary Society* a *Society of Atheists*.

I have put down these few contradictory Passages, for the sake of such as are Profelytes to Mr. *Bayle's* Philosophy; let them here see, that in following him, they only leave Religion, to follow *Blindness* and *Bigottry* in Systems of Prophaneness.

When *Clergymen* contradict one another, tho' it be but upon a Ceremony of Religion, *Infidels* make great Advantage of it; for,

Irreligion having no Arguments of its own, is forc'd to catch at every Foreign Objection.

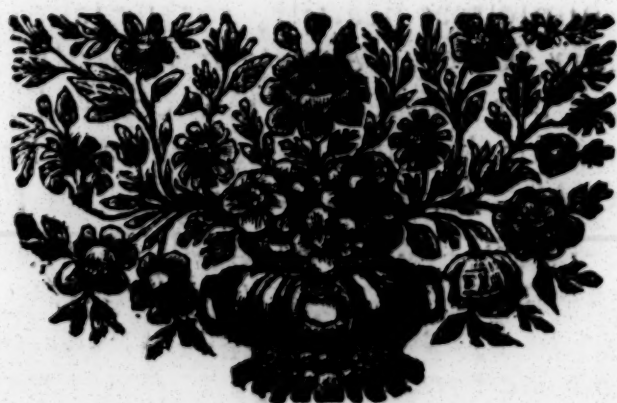
But Mr. *Bayle's Self-contradictions* upon the chief Article of his Philosophy, may, perhaps, not lessen his Authority with our Men of *Reason*.

For whether our *Free-Thinkers* are not such *Bigots*, as to adore Mr. *Bayle's Contradictions*, is what I will not presume to say.

I'll promise for nothing, but their little Minds, and blind Zeal, to have a Share in every Error that can give Offence to well-minded Men.

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F I N I S.



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